

NEGRO SLAVERY

DESCRIBED

BY A NEGRO:

BEING

THE NARRATIVE OF ASHTON WARNER,
A NATIVE OF ST. VINCENT'S.

With an Appendix,

CONTAINING THE

TESTIMONY OF FOUR CHRISTIAN MINISTERS,

RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE COLONIES,

ON THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY AS IT NOW EXISTS.

BY S. STRICKLAND. *ed.*

"And tears and toil have been my lot
Since I the white man's thrall became;
And sorer griefs I wish forgot—
Harsh blows and burning shame!
Oh, Englishman! thou ne'er canst know
The injured bondman's bitter woe,
When round his heart, like scorpions, cling
Black thoughts that madden while they sting!"

LONDON:

SAMUEL MAUNDER, NEWGATE STREET.

1831.

2

J. Westley and Co. 27, Ivy Lane.

CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	5
NARRATIVE OF ASHTON WARNER	17
APPENDIX.	
Deed of Manumission	66
Testimony of the Rev. Joseph Orton on Colonial Slavery.....	69
Testimony of the Rev. John Thorpe	83
Testimony of the Rev. J. M. Trew.....	95
Testimony of the Rev. William Wright.....	141

ADVERTISEMENT.

In consequence of the unexpected decease of Ashton Warner, while this little volume was in the press, the profits that may arise from its sale will no longer be required, as was originally designed, for his personal benefit. But, in compliance with a wish expressed by the poor negro on his death-bed, it is now proposed to appropriate the proceeds to the benefit of his aged mother, and the enfranchisement (should the amount prove so considerable) of his enslaved wife and child. And I have the satisfaction of being authorized to add, for the information of benevolent individuals disposed to contribute liberally towards the objects now intimated—whether by the purchase of copies of this volume, or by pecuniary donations—that the little charitable fund thus contemplated, will be placed under the immediate management of George Stephen, Esq., Solicitor, 17, King's Arms Yard, Coleman Street, and Thomas Pringle, Esq., Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, 18, Aldermanbury, who have kindly undertaken to superintend its proper application.

S. STRICKLAND.

March 1, 1831.

12040

INTRODUCTION.

IT seems difficult to account for the indifference manifested by a very numerous class of well-educated persons, in regard to the system of slavery existing in our colonies, on any other principle than their almost total and, I may add, criminal ignorance of the real facts of the case. Prejudice and misinformation on this subject have been, for a long series of years, fostered with unremitting assiduity by those interested in maintaining the West India system; a party whose corrupt influence over a large majority of the lighter vehicles of popular information has enabled them to gain possession of the public ear, and to abuse public credulity, to an extent not

generally appreciated, I imagine, by the friends of negro emancipation. I speak with the less hesitation on this topic, because I was myself, until only a few months ago, one of the apathetical and deluded class I am now animadverting upon. The truth is, I had drawn the little knowledge I then possessed on this subject chiefly from literary periodicals on the side of the planters, such as the *Quarterly Review*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, and other publications of the same class; works certainly but little calculated to excite the feelings or alarm the conscience on this momentous question. I had, consequently, never given the subject much serious thought, still less imagined that I was a sharer in a great national crime; and when I occasionally heard, through other channels, statements of the cruelty and oppression which prevail in our slave colonies, I was predisposed to regard such statements, generally, as very greatly exaggerated at the

least, if not in some cases absolutely fabricated for political purposes. Such tales appeared far too shocking to be true; and, without troubling myself to examine carefully into the real facts, I condemned the whole as matters of party agitation. The result was a strong indisposition to consider the question impartially, on its real merits; and thus, for a long time, the arguments of some friends of emancipation, whom I had the fortune occasionally to meet, were insufficient to remove my prejudices, or to satisfy me that the appeal of the abolitionists to the British government, in behalf of the slaves, was really called forth by the high and hallowed motives of Christian benevolence, and by a deep sense of the gross injustice and awful criminality of a free nation suffering such an abomination as negro slavery to exist in her dominions.

In common with most of the defenders and apologists of the colonial system, I was willing, it is true, to admit that slavery,

considered *in the abstract*, is a great evil and a gross injustice, which, though sanctioned by the usage of centuries, could not be defended upon Christian principles, being contrary to the rights of nature and the spirit of the gospel. But beyond this general admission I refused to advance; alleging that it would be an act of glaring injustice to the planters to deprive them of a property which had been secured to them by the concurrence of the legislature, if not by the law of the land. I did not pause to ask myself such questions as the following: — Who gave this nation that right? Can any enactments of human legislators lawfully make one man the property of another?—especially when the beings thus bartered are the inhabitants of a country over which we possess no claim but such as lawless force can confer? Is a robbery thus sanctioned the less an infringement of the eighth clause of the Scripture decalogue? Or, if our fathers have lived

in the commission of iniquity, can an act of parliament (supposing such to exist), passed in a less enlightened age, render it lawful through a thousand generations? Has God poured the tide of life through the African's breast, and animated it with a portion of his own divine spirit, and at the same time deprived him of all natural affections, that *he* alone is to be struck off the list of rational beings, and placed on a level with the brutes? Is his flesh marble and his sinews iron, or his immortal spirit of a class condemned, without hope, to penal suffering, that he is called upon to endure incessant toil, and to be subjected to degradation, bodily and mental, such as no other family of Adam's race have ever been destined to endure without the vengeance of heaven being signally displayed upon the oppressors? Does the African mother feel less love to her offspring than the white woman?—or the African husband regard with less tenderness the wife of his bosom?

Is his heart dead to the ties of kindred—his nature so brutalised that the sacred associations of home and country awaken no emotions in his breast?—Let the history of Hayti, since the abrogated rights of humanity were there re-conquered by the African race, render a practical reply to such questions—and unanswerably demonstrate that the negro does feel, keenly feel, the wrongs inflicted upon him by his unrighteous enslavers, and that his mind, barren as it has been rendered by hard usage, and desolated with misery, is not unwatered by the pure and gentle streams of natural affection. And, once convinced of this, can we longer remain unmoved by his sad condition, or contemplate with indifference his bodily and mental sufferings, and still dare to postpone to an indefinite period the termination of his oppression and of our own guilt?

The entire change in my own ideas, in regard to slavery, was chiefly effected by the

frequent opportunities which Providence recently and unexpectedly threw in my way of conversing with several negroes, both male and female, who had been British colonial slaves, and who had borne in their own persons the marks of the brand and the whip, and had drank the bitter cup to its dregs. To their simple and affecting narratives I could not listen unmoved. The voice of truth and nature prevailed over my former prejudices. I beheld slavery unfolded in all its revolting details; and, having been thus irresistibly led to peruse the authentic accounts of the real character and effects of the system, I resolved no longer to be an accomplice in its criminality, though it were only by keeping silence regarding it. Thinking that the same means which had operated so effectually upon my own mind might produce a favourable result in other persons who had been accustomed to view the case in the same careless and prejudiced manner, it occurred to me that I might publish, with

some small advantage to the cause, the following little history, taken down from the narration of a young negro, who had recently made his escape from slavery in the West Indies, and had come over to England on purpose to establish his claims to freedom.

The narrator is Ashton Warner, a native of the island of St. Vincent's. He is about twenty-four years of age, and possesses very prepossessing manners and appearance. His amiable disposition and natural intelligence are striking proofs of what the African is capable, were his mental powers suffered to expand under the genial influences of civilization and Christianity. Claimed as a slave under peculiar circumstances, Ashton has enjoyed the unwonted privilege of not having been subjected in his own person (at least not habitually, like the unhappy field negroes,) to the cruel and degrading punishments which form a prominent and characteristic feature in the discipline of a West India sugar-plantation. But his state-

ments are the more valuable on this account, since they are neither dictated by revenge nor by an egotistical desire to recount his own sorrows ; but by a sincere wish to benefit those whose severe sufferings he had witnessed, and whose severe labours, in part only, he had shared. Having once tasted the sweets of liberty, he is the more capable of discriminating between the advantages conferred by it and the evils arising from its deprivation. We find him regarding a state of freedom as the greatest of all earthly blessings, and asserting his independence with the resolution and spirit which a sense of justice and a love of liberty alone can give. The slave grovels in the dust, and passively yields up his body to the degrading lash ; resistance, he feels, is useless and only increases the miseries of his condition. Animated by no hope, and bound to his employer by no ties of reciprocal interest, he drags on from day to day his brutalised existence, and looks forward to death as the

only termination of his woes. He sinks into a living machine whose actions are guided and enforced by the will of another, and his words and looks correspond with his mental and bodily abasement. But in Ashton the inextinguishable spark of liberty, once kindled, repels all the threats of managers and overseers to degrade him to a slave. He feels his importance in the scale of humanity, and we find him, while but a boy, asserting his natural rights as a man.

The character of his aunt, Daphne Crosbie, is singularly interesting. Though born a slave, and consequently labouring under every disadvantage of colour and education, she possesses a spirit of disinterested benevolence that might do honour to any nation and to any rank. We find this affectionate and generous woman devoting all her little property to the emancipation of her former companions in bondage ; first procuring the freedom of her aged parents and kindred, and then labouring with Christian love to

redeem others who had shared with her the sorrows and the shames of servitude.

In writing Ashton's narrative, I have adhered strictly to the simple facts, adopting, wherever it could conveniently be done, his own language, which, for a person in his condition, is remarkably expressive and appropriate. Had I been inclined to give a recital of revolting cruelty, I should have chosen another case; and for such, unhappily, I had not far to seek. But those who wish to read such mournful narratives of human depravity will find enough for their information (far too many for the honour of human nature!) recorded in the publications of the Anti-Slavery Society.

The profits arising from the sale of this tract will be appropriated to the benefit of Ashton, who has been for the last three months in England, endeavouring to establish his claims to freedom; and who is at present suffering under severe illness, without any adequate means of subsistence.

With a view to render this Sketch of Colonial Slavery more complete, and to enable the reader to compare the details given by Ashton with those recorded by intelligent and conscientious eye-witnesses from England, I have subjoined, as an Appendix, the very important testimonies on this subject of three highly respectable clergymen of the established Church, and of an excellent Wesleyan Missionary—testimonies as yet but partially known to the public, and which comprise a mass of information equally recent and interesting.

Should this little tract assist, however feebly, in the diffusion of correct information in regard to the general condition and the feelings of the slaves, and thus tend to promote the great and good cause of justice and mercy, the writer's object will be fully accomplished. Like the widow's mite cast into the sacred treasury, those who love the truth will not deem it unworthy because its value is but humble.

London, February 19, 1831.

S. S.

NARRATIVE
OF
ASHTON WARNER.

I WAS born in the Island of St. Vincent's, and baptized by the name of Ashton Warner, in the parish church, by the Rev. Mr. Gildon. My father and mother, at the time of my birth, were slaves on Cane Grove estate, in Bucumar Valley, then the property of Mr. Ottley. I was an infant at the breast when Mr. Ottley died; and shortly after the estate was put to sale, that the property might be divided among his family. Before Cane Grove was sold, my aunt, Daphne Crosbie, took the opportunity of buying my mother and me of Mr. Ottley's trustees. My aunt

had been a slave, but a favoured one. She had money left her by a coloured gentleman of the name of Crosbie, with whom she lived, and whose name she took. After his death she went to reside at Kingston. Finding it a good thing to be free, aunt Daphne wished to make all her friends free also, particularly the slaves on the estate where she was born, and with whom she had shared, in her early days, all the sorrows of negro servitude. She had a large heart, and felt great kindness for her own people; but her means were not equal to her good wishes. She bought her old parents of Mr. Jackson, Mr. Ottley's executor; and, as it was her earnest desire to make us all happy, she would have bought my uncle John Baptiste (my mother's brother) too; but Mr. Wilson, the gentleman who purchased the estate, would not sell him. His reason for refusing my aunt never knew, for my uncle was an old man then, and nearly past work. Mr. Wilson sent him away to the Island of St. Lucia, and it was some years

before aunt Daphne heard any tidings of him. At last some persons, coming from St. Lucia to St. Vincent's, told her that he lay very sick on Mr. Grant's estate. My aunt was glad to find that he was still living, and she went herself to make him free. She had never crossed the water, or been on the great sea, but she overcame her fears, and hired a small boat, and went directly to St. Lucia. She found my poor uncle in a very miserable state, and in this condition she bought him of his master, and brought him back to St. Vincent's. He was ill a long, long time; it was many long weary months before he could even take up a broom to sweep the house. He was very grateful to aunt Daphne for all that she had done for him; and so were we all. She was a very good, kind woman, and a Christian, though a black woman; and we (her relations) all loved her very, very much. We had no one else to love—she was all the world to us.

Whilst I lived with my aunt at Kingston I

was very happy. I had no heavy tasks to do ; and she was as careful over me as if she had been my own mother, and used to keep me with her in the house, that I might not be playing about in the streets with bad companions. My mother made sausages and *souse*,* and I used to help her to carry them to gentlemen's houses for sale. This was light labour to her, for she had been a field slave, kept at hard work, and driven to it by the whip. I am sure our best days were spent with my dear aunt ; nor did she make us alone happy ; all the money she could save went to purchase the freedom of slaves who had formerly been her companions in bondage at Cane Grove, or to make their condition better. There was not a person upon the island who did not speak well of Daphne Crosbie ; black or white it was all the same. She bore a good character until the day she died.

I lived with my aunt till I was ten years

* Slices of pig's head, salted and prepared in a particular manner, and sold in the markets by the slaves.

old, when I was claimed as a slave belonging to the Cane Grove estate, by Mr. Wilson. This was a hard and unjust claim; but Mr. Wilson said, that though my mother was sold I was not—that the best slaves had been sold off the estate—that I was *his* property, and he would claim me wherever I was to be found. Now, he was wrong in all this, and I can prove to you, in two short minutes, that I did not belong to him. When my aunt manumitted my mother and me, Mr. Wilson had not yet bought the estate; and in the Island of St. Vincent's it has always been a customary rule that the young child at the breast is sold as one with its mother, and does not become separate property till it is five or six years old; so that Mr. Wilson's claim was very unjust and oppressive.*

When my aunt found Mr. Wilson bent on

* This is poor Ashton's own statement. Whether the Colonial *Slave Law* will support his claim for freedom on this ground, is a question which remains to be determined.—S. S.

taking me away by force, she went to Mr. Jackson, the gentleman from whom she had purchased my mother, and told him the state of the case, and he gave her a written paper to take to the Chief Justice of the island, to prove that I belonged to Daphne Crosbie, should Mr. Wilson continue to claim me. My aunt went to the Governor and showed him this paper, and also the manumission paper she had received from Mr. Jackson. The Governor, after looking at it, said that Mr. Wilson had no legal right to claim me upon the estate, and he promised my aunt that he would write to him to that effect. But we never knew whether he did or not, for we never got an answer from him. It is of no use trusting to what the white people in the West Indies say; they always forget their promises to slaves. Before this happened, my aunt had bound me apprentice to a cooper, to learn his trade. I was bound for seven years, and had signed the indenture myself, as a free black, by making a cross for my name.

My master's name was Pierre Wynn. He was a kind good master, and I never ceased to lament the cause which parted me from him. I had been with him between two and three months, and was busy one morning at work in the cooper's yard, helping the journeyman to truss a molasses-cask, when Mr. Wilson's manager, Mr. Donald, with two coloured men, and a white named Newman, came into the yard. This man, Newma., had informed Mr. Wilson where I was, and he sent his people to take me away by force. When the manager came into the yard, he said, "Which is Ashton?" I answered, quite innocently, not suspecting any mischief, "I am Ashton." Directly I said so the manager caught hold of me by the back of my neck. I did not know why he held me. I did not know what to think—I could not get my breath to speak—I was dreadfully frightened, and trembled all over. The other men got hold of me, and held me fast. They then led me away to Mr. Dalzell, Mr. Wilson's attorney, and shut me

up in his office till Mr. Wilson came. Mr. Dalzell was afraid that I would try to make my escape, and to make sure of me one man kept watch at the window and another at the door. When Mr. Wilson came in he did not know me, and asked who I was. One of the men told him that I was Ashton. He said, "Very well; keep him here till I am ready to send him down to the estate." He then came up to the place where I was standing, and examined me from head to foot; then turned to Mr. Dalzell, and began talking to him about me. I was too young, and too much frightened at being stolen away, to remember much of their discourse; but I am very sure that I shall never forget that day.

Before Mr. Wilson left the office, my mother and Daphne Crosbie came to hear what was to be done with me, and why I had been taken away. But all they said was of no use; they could do no good where there was no justice to be had. Mr. Wilson insisted that I was a slave, and *his* slave, and

He would have it so, in spite of my mother's tears and my aunt's entreaties. My poor mother was greatly distressed, and cried very bitterly. She entreated Mr. Wilson, if he thought he had a just claim for me, to put me in gaol till the question as to my freedom could be fairly settled ; but he refused to do this, and when she continued her entreaties he grew angry, and ordered her not to stop in the yard, but to go away directly. And she and aunt Crosbie, on finding that nothing could be done for me there, were obliged to leave me in his hands.

The manager then put me into a boat, and took me down to the estate. It was rather late in the afternoon when we got there. I had nothing given me to do that day. It was Saturday, and I was not set to work till the Monday morning. I was very sad, and wished very much to run away. I could not bear the thought of being a slave, and I was very restless and unhappy.

On the Monday morning, John, the head

cooper, took me down to the sugar works to help him ; but I had no heart to work—I did nothing but think how I might run away. I was not knowing enough, however, to make my escape ; and, after consulting with myself a long time, I found it would be the best plan to make myself as patient as I could. But still I was always thinking of my mother and aunt, and of Pierre Wynn, and the home I had been taken from. The estate of Cane Grove was in the middle of a deep valley, near the sea shore. Mr. Wilson's house stood upon the brow of the hill, and overlooked the whole sugar plantation. He had about three hundred slaves, and was considered one of the severest masters in the whole island.

The manager put me under the charge of John, the cooper. He was a black man, and a slave ; but he was very cruel to those of his own colour who were placed under him. I had not been with him many days before he gave me a proof of this. He ordered me to go to the plantation and cut a bundle of faggots from

some trees which had been lately felled. This was at noon, when the sun was at the hottest. Owing to the great heat I was a long time making up my bundle. When I brought it home, he was angry with me because I had not cut more, and said that he knew that I had been playing and idling away my time, instead of minding my work. I told him that I had worked as hard as I could, but the heat was so great that I had no strength to chop more. He seized hold of me, and, holding me fast with one hand, he took a piece of wood from the bundle, and struck me over the head again and again, till I was quite stunned with the pain, and the blood flowed from the wound. I went crying to the manager, and complained of the cooper's cruelty. He was not so harsh a man as John, and he told him that he had done wrong; for he knew that Mr. Wilson did not wish me to be treated severely. This was not from any liking he had to me above the rest of the slaves; but Mr. Wilson, having no

just claim to me, was fearful that ill usage would induce me to make my escape. I did not suspect this then, but I knew it when I grew older. After John had treated me in this way, I went to live with a slave on the estate called Ben : I slept at his place, and only worked with John, in the coopers' yard, during the day.

The first time I was trusted to leave the estate, John's wife took me with her to Kingston on Sunday morning (which is the slaves' market-day) to sell some Indian corn. I carried the Indian corn to market in an open basket upon my head, just as it had been gathered in the long ears. I had, that day, a great desire to see my mother and aunt, which became stronger and stronger the nearer we drew to Kingston. As we went along, I asked the cooper's wife to let me go home and speak to my people. I was so earnest about it, and pressed her so hard, that at last she said she would let me go if I would promise to come back soon. In the

market, however, I met my mother, and John's wife gave me into her charge. Oh, I was so glad to see her!—so full of joy after our long, long parting; and when I saw with her a boy of my own age, called William, who had been my play-fellow, and whom I loved as if he had been my brother, and thought I should never see again, I could contain myself no longer, but burst into tears. William was as glad to see me as I was to see him, and we went home together. I told him, as we went along, all that had happened to me since I was stolen away, and how much I disliked being a slave. I was so happy with my friends all that day that I quite forgot my promise to the cooper's wife. I went out to play with William: he took me on board the ship to which he belonged; and, when John's wife came to my aunt's to take me home with her, I was no where to be found; and she was obliged, though much against her will, to return without me. When asked by the manager what had become of

me, she told him that I was lost. He was very angry with her for letting me out of her sight; and, thinking that I had taken this opportunity to run away, he ordered some of his people to go to Kingston early in the morning and bring me back. One of the slaves set off before it was light in search of me. But, as my mother and aunt had persuaded me not to run away, but to return to the estate, and be a good and dutiful lad to my master till they could obtain justice for me,--as soon as the day broke I bade them good-bye, and went back to Cane Grove. The slave who had been sent to find me missed me upon the road, and was the whole day looking for me about the town.

The next morning Mr. Wilson rode up to the cooper's shop, and asked me where I had been; and why I did not come home on the Sunday night, as I had promised? I told him that I went to see my mother, and that I did not mean to stay long away. He did not say many angry words to me; but he told me, the

next time I went to Kingston, and wished to see my mother, I must ask his leave, and he would give me a paper to show that I had it. But I never had an opportunity to come to him for a pass: he went away suddenly to England, and I never saw him again.

Mr. Wilson left me to the care of Mr. Donald, his manager, and Mr. Dalzell, his attorney, who always treated me very well—though I was still held unjustly as a slave. But some time afterwards Mr. Donald was discharged from the estate, because he had not made enough of sugar; and it was reported by some person to Mr. Wilson that he was too indulgent to the slaves, and did not work them hard enough. Another manager came in his place, called Mr. John M'Fie, who was a very severe task-master, and worked the slaves much harder. Under him my condition became considerably worse. One day he sent and called me to his house, and said that, as there was not sufficient job-work for me about the homestall, I must take a hoe and join the

field gang. If the sentence of death had been passed upon me, I could not have felt more stunned. I shall never forget it! I knew that if I was sent to the field it would make me destroy myself—for it is always counted by negroes who have been above it, the worst of all punishments—the lowest step of disgrace—to be placed in the field gang. It is a dreadful state of slavery. I have often seen it—I may say I have *felt* it, though never in my own person. God mercifully spared me that trial. I declare before Almighty God that I would far rather die than submit to it; and, when the manager threatened to send me to the field, I felt so ill and so desperate that I did not care for life. But I did not answer a word. If I had spoken my thoughts, he would have had me flogged on the spot. I turned away in silence, with the salt water in my eyes. He saw that it would not do to drive me desperate, and he soon sent after me and ordered me to another task. On another occasion, when something had offended him, Mr.

M'Fie once more threatened to send me to the field; but he never went so far as actually to force me to take the hoe. Had he done so, I can scarcely tell what would have been the consequence. I think it would have been my destruction.

As I have spoken of the condition of the field negroes as being so much worse than that of the mechanics among whom I was ranked on the estate, I shall here endeavour to describe the manner in which the field gang were worked on Cane Grove estate. They were obliged to be in the field before five o'clock in the morning; and, as the negro houses were at the distance of from three to four miles from the cane pieces, they were generally obliged to rise as early as four o'clock, to be at their work in time. The driver is first in the field, and calls the slaves together by cracking the whip or blowing the conch shell. Before five o'clock the overseer calls over the roll; and if any of the slaves are so unfortunate as to be too late, even by a few

minutes, which, owing to the distance, is often the case, the driver flogs them as they come in, with the cart-whip, or with a scourge of tamarind rods. When flogged with the whip, they are stripped and held down upon the ground, and exposed in the most shameful manner.

In the cultivation of the canes the slaves work in a row. Each person has a hoe, and the women are expected to do as much as the men. This work is so hard that any slave, newly put to it, in the course of a month becomes so weak that often he is totally unfit for labour. If he falls back behind the rest, the driver keeps forcing him up with the whip.

They work from five o'clock to nine, when they are allowed to sit down for half an hour in the field, and take such food as they have been able to prepare over night. But many have no food ready, and so fast till mid-day.

They go to work again directly after half an hour's respite, and labour till twelve

o'clock, when they leave off for dinner. They are allowed two hours of mid-day intermission, out of crop time, and an hour and a half in crop time.

During this interval every slave must pick a bundle of grass to bring home for the cattle at night. The grass grows in tufts, often scattered over a great space of ground, and, when the season is dry, it is very scarce and withered, so that the slaves collect it slowly and with difficulty, and are often employed most of the time allowed them for mid-day rest, in seeking for it. I have frequently known them occupied the whole two hours in collecting it.

They work again in gang from two till seven o'clock. It is then dark. When they return home the overseer calls over the roll, and demands of every man and woman their bundles of grass. He weighs with his hand each bundle as it is given in, and, if it be too light, the person who presents it is either instantly laid down and flogged severely

with the cart-whip, or is put into the stocks for the whole night. If the slaves bring home no grass, they are not only put into the stocks all night, but are more severely flogged the next morning. This grass-picking is a very sore grievance to the field slaves.

When they are manuring the ground, the slaves are forced to carry the wet manure in open baskets upon their heads. This is most unpleasant as well as severe work. It is a usual occupation for wet weather, and the moisture from the manure drips constantly down upon the faces, and over the body and clothes of the slaves. They are forced to run with their loads as fast as they can ; and, if they flag, the driver is instantly at their heels with the cart-whip.

The crop-time usually commences in January and lasts till June, and, if the season is wet, till July. During this season every slave must bring in a bundle of cane-tops for the cattle, instead of a bundle of grass. They

then go immediately to the sugar works, where they have to take up the *mogass* which was spread out at nine o'clock in the morning to dry for fuel to boil the sugar. This *mogass* is the stalks of the cane after the juice has been squeezed out by the mill. The slaves are employed till ten at night in gathering in the *mogass*, that it may not be wetted with the dew and rendered unfit for immediate use. The overseer then calls over the roll, and issues orders for a certain spell of them to be up and at the works at one o'clock in the morning. After this the slaves have to prepare their suppers; for, if they have no very aged parents or friends belonging to them, they must do this themselves, which occupies them another hour. Every creature that is capable of work must take a part in the labours of the crop; and no person remains at home but those who are totally unfit for work. Slaves who are too old and weak to go to the field have to make up bundles of *mogass*, cut grass for the stock, &c.

During this season all the mechanics on the estate are employed to pot the sugar; carpenters, coopers, masons, and rum-distillers, even the pasture-boys who tend the cattle, are called in to assist. To the little people are given small tubs to carry the sugar into the curing house; and the grown-up slaves have shovels to fill the tubs for them. When employed in potting the sugar, we did not leave off to get our breakfast till ten or eleven o'clock, and I have known it mid-day before we have tasted food.

The whole gang of field slaves are divided into spells, and every man and woman able to work has not only to endure during crop-time the severe daily labour, but to work half the night also, or three whole nights in the week. The work is very severe, and great numbers of the slaves, during this period, sink under it, and become ill; but if they complain, their complaints are not readily believed, or are considered only a pretence to escape from labour. If they are so very ill that their inability to

work can be no longer doubted, they are at length sent to the sick house.

The sick-house is just like a pen to keep pigs in; if you wish to keep yourself clean and decent, you cannot. It is one of the greatest punishments to the slaves to be sent there. When we were hard pressed, and had much sugar to pot, the manager would often send to the sick-house for the people who were sick, or lame with sores, to help us. If they refused to come, and said that they were unable to work, they were taken down and severely flogged, by the manager's order, with the cart-whip. There is nothing in slavery harder to bear than this. When you are ill and cannot work, your pains are made light of, and your complaints neither listened to, nor believed. I have seen people who were so sick that they could scarcely stand, dragged out of the sick-house, and tied up to a tree; and flogged in a shocking manner; then driven with the whip to the work. I have seen slaves in this state crawl away, and

lie down among the wet trash to get a little ease, though they knew that it would most likely cause their death.

The quantity of food allowed the slaves is from two pounds and a half to three pounds of salt-fish per week, for each grown person. They could easily eat this in two days, but they must make it last till they receive a fresh allowance from the overseer. The rest of their food they raise upon their provision grounds. The owner gives to each slave from thirty to forty feet square of ground; not the best ground, but such as has been over-cropped, and is no longer productive for canes. This is taken from them the next year, when, by manuring and planting with yams and other things, it has been brought round, and recovered strength for the cultivation of sugar. The slaves are likewise permitted to cultivate waste pieces of ground, and the headlands of fields, that are unfit for planting. They work this ground every Sunday. It is generally given to them in March or April,

and it is taken away in December or January. Besides the Sunday, they get part of twenty-six Saturdays, out of crop-time, to cultivate their grounds. What I mean by saying they get only *part* of these Saturdays is this—that they are employed in their master's work, such as carrying out trash, &c., from five to ten o'clock in the forenoon; and in the evening they must bring each his bundle of grass to deliver as usual at the calling of the lists; so that about seven hours, even of the day, which is called their own, is occupied with their owner's work. They are obliged to work on these days at the provision grounds, if they wish ever so much for a holiday. If they are absent when the overseer inspects the grounds, they are flogged, or put in the stocks. The grounds produce plantains, yams, potatoes, pumpkins, calabashes, &c. On the Sunday, at every town, a market is held, in which the slaves are allowed to sell the produce of their grounds. Those that can save a little money, buy a pig and fatten it,

that, in case of any death happening among their friends, they may sell the pig to provide a few necessaries for the funeral. They bury the dead during the night, being allowed no time during the day for their funerals.

In building their houses, they are allowed as much board as will form a window and a door. They go to the woods and cut wild canes, to form the walls and roof. The huts are thatched with cane-trash or tops.

For clothing, the owner gives to each slave in the year six yards of blue stuff, called bamboo, and six yards of brown. The young people and children are given a less allowance, in proportion to their size and age; the young children getting only a small stripe to tie round the waist. For bed-clothing, they give them only a blanket once in four or five years; and they are obliged to wear this till it falls in pieces. If the slaves require other clothes, they must buy them out of their own little savings. Many of the field negroes are very badly off for clothing. A good many

are always to be seen with only a rag of cloth round their loins in all weathers.

People so hardly, so harshly, treated, and so destitute of every comfort, cannot be supposed to work with a willing mind. They have no home which they can well call their own. They are worked beyond their strength, and live in perpetual fear of the whip. They are insulted, tormented, and indecently exposed and degraded ; yet English people wonder that they are not contented. Some have even said that they are happy ! Let such people place themselves for a few minutes under the same yoke, and see if they could bear it. Such bondage is ruin both to the soul and body of the slave ; and I hope every good Englishman will daily pray to God, that the yoke of slavery may soon be broken from off the necks of my unfortunate countrymen for ever.*

* Such is the impressive language in which Ashton speaks of slavery. The above are his own expressions ; for, though an uneducated, he is a very intelligent, negro, and speaks remarkably good English. Any

What made me feel more deeply for the sad condition of the field slaves was the circumstance of my having taken a wife from among them, after I had resided several years on Cane Grove estate. When I was about twenty-one years of age, finding my condition lonely, because I had no friends to manage for me, as the other slaves had, I wished to marry, and have a home of my own, and a kind partner to do for me. Among the field slaves there was a very respectable young woman, called Sally, for whom I had long felt a great deal of regard. At last I asked her to be my wife; and we stood up in her father's house, before her mother, and her uncle, and her sisters, and, holding each other by the hand, pledged our troth as husband and wife, and promised before God to be good and kind to each other, and to love and help each other, as long as we lived.

reader, who wishes it, may see and converse with himself, by making application through the publisher.—S. S.

And so we married. And though it was not as white folks marry, before the parson, yet I considered her as much my wife, and I loved her as well, as though we had been married in the church; and she was as careful, and managed as well for me, as if she had been my mother. I could not bear to see her work in the field. It is, as I have already said, a very sad and hard condition of slavery; and the more my wife suffered, the more I wished to be free, and to make her so. When she was with child, she was flogged for not coming out early enough to work, and afterwards, when far advanced in pregnancy, she was put into the stocks by the manager, because she said she was unable to go to the field. My heart was almost broken to see her so treated, but I could do nothing to help her; and it would have made matters worse if I had attempted to speak up for her. She was twice punished in this cruel manner, though the overseer must have known that she was in no condition to work. After our child was born,

she was again repeatedly flogged for not coming sooner to the field, though she had stopped merely to attend and suckle the baby. But they had no feeling for the mother or for her child; they cared only for the work. It is a dreadful thing to be a field negro; and it is scarcely less dreadful, if one's heart is not quite hardened, to have a wife, or a husband, or a child, in that condition. On this account I was often grieved that I had taken poor Sally to be my wife; for it caused her more suffering as a mother, while her cruel treatment wrung my heart, without my being able to move a finger, or utter a word, in her behalf.

After Mr. M'Fie had become manager, I thought now would be my time to run away; but my aunt still begged me to remain quietly on the estate till she could raise money to get justice. She put the business into the hands of Mr. Jackson. He promised very fair, and said that he could easily get me out of Mr. Wilson's hands. My aunt gave him £4. to

begin with ; but he shortly after went to reside at Grenada ; and we lost the money, and got no justice. This was a sad cross to all our hopes, and my mother's husband was obliged to go to Grenada to recover the papers ; but the money he never got. These lawyers in the West Indies never return any money. You are obliged to fee them before they will do any thing for you. If you are rich, they will do all they can, in the hope of getting more money ; but if you are poor, they soon grow tired of helping you ; and you have to pay them whether they do any thing for you or not. It is all one to them whether you are right or wrong ; they only care for the pay.

We were glad to get the papers into our own hands again. My mother then went to Judge Hobson, but he said that, as I was claimed upon the estate, I had better remain upon it till they could prove my manumission, and then he would make Mr. Wilson pay me wages for all the time I had been upon the estate. Though he was the chief Judge, he

said that he could do nothing for me till the case was brought into court. He then sent us to the Attorney General, who looked over the papers, and asked my mother whether she was certain that I was the very child she had at the breast when she was sold to Daphne Crosbie, and if she had any person that could prove it in court? My mother said that I was her first-born child; and she could bring respectable persons to prove that I was an infant at the breast at the time Daphne Crosbie bought her. He then asked if Mr. Wilson's attorney had ever seen those papers? My mother replied, "Often and often; but there was no good to be done with him—no justice to be had." He then said that he would see Mr. Dalzell himself, and settle with him what was to be done.

All this time I was on the estate, hoping for the best; nor did I go with my mother to the lawyers, till this last time, when I had leave of absence for nine days, to try and get an answer. For Mr. Wilson wrote out from

England, that if my friends would give a little money in advance, he would let me off the estate as a slave, and employ me as a free person receiving wages; only they must give him security for the payment of the rest of my value. I thought this a great thing at first; but when I applied to my friends they told me that I had as good a claim to freedom as they had, and that I must not submit to be sold in any way, as that would be owning myself to have been justly enslaved. I was not altogether satisfied with what they said, but went one morning to Mr. Donald, the manager who had first taken me from my apprenticeship away to the estate by force. He was then manager of the Hope estate, in Bucumar Valley, not far from Cane Grove. When I showed him my papers, he was surprised, and blamed me very much for not bringing them forward before. "I knew," he said, "that you were free; but I did not think that you had any papers to show. Your name is not upon the books; but we had an old worn-

out slave, called Ashton, upon the estate, and Mr. Wilson claims you under his name." He then told me that he was sorry to take me as he did, but he was forced to do it, by Mr. Wilson's order. "You are free," he said; "I would not give a penny for you as a slave; for Mr. Wilson can give no title with you, and you could leave any person who was so foolish as to buy you." I told him that my mother had applied to all the lawyers, but could get no justice. He laughed, and said, she must write a petition and send to England, and then she would obtain what she wanted.

I went back to the estate; but determined that I would no longer be treated as a slave, nor work like a slave. I refused to turn out early in the morning; but went down to the works at nine, and helped the slaves in what they were doing, just as it pleased myself; for, as I was not paid, I did not think that I had any right to work.

Mr. M'Fie, the manager, was very angry with me for refusing to work. He said, with

an oath and language too bad to be repeated, "that I must and should work!" "I am free," I said, "and will not work like a slave." He replied, "You are not free; your name is on my master's books; you are left under my care, and you shall do your duty like the rest. If you refuse to turn out, I will have you flogged with the cart-whip." I was very angry—I felt savage at him, and said, in great heat, "You may do it as soon as you like, Mr. M'Fie, for it will only make me more resolute not to work. I have been made to work unjustly too long, and I will put up with it no more."

The next morning I was in the carpenter's shop; it was a long building divided from the cooper's shop by a slight partition. Mr. M'Fie rode up, and, seeing me standing in the carpenter's shop looking on, he got off his horse and came in. He was in a great rage. "Hollo! Ashton!" he said, "what are you doing there?" "Nothing," I said. "What is the reason that you are not at your work?"

I said quite coolly, "I don't know what work mine is." He said, "It is cooper's work." I answered directly, "I do not intend to do any cooper's work at all." He said, "I will make you do it, you scoundrel!" He looked very angry, and I should have been afraid of him if I had not felt so angry myself. When he said, "I will make you," I turned out of the place, and went into the cooper's shop. I folded my arms, and stood up against the wall. I was in such a passion I could not speak. He followed me in, and stood over against me, looking at me with a smile of contempt upon his face. At last he said, "Ashton, don't be foolish; do your work the same as you used to do. You are not better than the other negroes, and whilst you are under me you shall work like them." I felt my heart would burst if I did not speak out all that was in it. "Mr. M'Fie," I said, "I will never work here again; I was a great fool to work as I did—every body says so; I will be such a fool no more." He was sur-

prised. He looked at me very hard, then mounted his horse, and rode away. I am sure that he would have punished me, but he was afraid of getting into trouble, for Mr. Dalzell had told him that he must not lift a hand against me ; but, notwithstanding this, he had already beaten me cruelly on the following occasion.

One morning an ox fell into the ditch ; I was the first person who discovered the accident, and I ran directly and called the pasture-men to help me to get it out. Whilst we were pulling the ox out of the water Mr. M'Fie came up. He was determined to quarrel with us, and he began by declaring that we did not pull hard enough—that we did not wish to get the ox out ; and, snatching up an old broken iron butt-hoop, he began to beat us with it as soon as we got the animal upon the bank. I felt that I had not only done my duty, but had been the means of saving the ox's life ; and when he struck me over the head with the hoop, I grew so angry that I

tried to get it out of his hand ; but he only struck me the harder. When he dropped the hoop I took it up, stained as it was with my blood, and went to Kingston, and showed it to my aunt and mother. The manager sent after me directly, but the man did not see me, though I was in my aunt's house. He told her to advise me to come back, for the manager was sorry for what he had done. A week after this I met the same man. He attempted to seize hold of me, but I got away from him, and made my escape. He then went to the attorney, and told him that he had seen me, but that I had got away. Mr. Dalzell told him that, as he had suffered me to make my escape, he would stop his allowance, which was three pounds of fish a week. He asked him if I had any relations in town. The man said, " Oh, yes ; he has plenty of relations." He then told him to go to my family, and to tell them to come to him, and he would give them a paper to the manager for me, to say that he should not strike or use me ill any more.

I went to the attorney myself after this, to see if I could prevail upon him to help me. He asked me the reason why I did not come to him before, and why I had made a fool of myself by leaving the estate? I told him that I had no right to be upon the estate at all, much less right had I to be ill-treated. He said, "Go back, Ashton, and I will not suffer the manager again to ill-treat you."

I took his advice, and went back, though I did not much like to go; but, as he said that he would write to Mr. Wilson and get me out, I went more cheerfully. When I saw the manager the next morning, he said that he was sorry that he had struck me, and asked why I went away. I said, "Because you beat me." He replied, "It is my duty to beat any negro on the estate. I am sorry only because I took an iron hoop and cut your head; but the next time I will take you down and give you a complete cart-whipping." I felt my blood rise at this, and I said, in great heat, "I should like to see you do it;"

for I thought that, if he did, I could make him pay dearly, when I claimed my freedom, for flogging a free man with the cart-whip. After he made this speech, I said to him, "Mr. M'Fie, I did not think that you had been so brutal as to strike a man over the head with an iron hoop for doing his duty. You must, Sir, have had some spite against me, or you could not have done it." He said, "Spite! there is not a negro upon the estate I respect more than I do you; but it is my duty to flog them, and you too, when you behave amiss." He then told me to go to my work.

After he left the cooper's shop, I turned to and assisted the people, but I would not do it whilst he was by. The other slaves told me that I had done right, for if they were in my case they would not work without wages—that, when they went to the town, all the free people were asking about me, and said that I must be fond of slavery to remain there, for I had no business upon the

estate. These things made me less inclined to stay than ever. I felt convinced that if I were not free the manager would not have put up with what I had said. If any negro upon the estate had replied to him as I had done, he would have been flogged to death.

One day the overseer who was under Mr. M'Fie, came to me, and asked me if I meant to work? "When I get wages for working, then I'll work," I replied. He answered—"There's little to do now—but, when the crop-time comes, we will make you work. You say you are a free man—you think yourself a gentleman, and that you will do as you please; but we will make you do as we please then."

The manner in which I was thus kept, from youth to manhood, in a state of slavery, was very distressing to my mother. What she suffered God alone can tell. Had I been free I should have worked to help her, but she was obliged to toil in her old age in the hope of serving me. I bore, for a long time, the

manager's threats, till I could endure them no longer; and the day they began to cut the canes, to make the sugar, I ran away from the estate and returned to it no more. I took my papers to the governor's secretary, and he gave me a pass to go to Grenada as a free man. It gave me great grief to leave my poor wife, especially to leave her in the sad condition of a field negro; but I saw no other means open to me to obtain my freedom; and unless I got my own freedom I should never be able to free her. And, then, to be the father of a young family of slaves, who must grow up to endure the same sad lot, was very bitter to me, and made me often repent my thoughtlessness in marrying a poor unfortunate slave—though I loved her dearly. We had been about fifteen months married when I was thus obliged to leave her; and our child was then about four months old.

Three days after I landed at Grenada I was so lucky as to meet with a young man whom I had known at St. Vincent's. He

asked me, what I was doing at Grenada, and if I had any work? I told him, No—that was just what I wanted: that I had left St. Vincent's because Mr. Wilson had claimed me as a slave, and I was going to England to see whether he would acknowledge my freedom, and pay me for the years which I had been unjustly forced to work upon his estate. My friend's name was James Fox; he was the master of a schooner, and he said that he would give me work as long as I remained at Grenada. From him I received the first money I ever earned on my own account; no money ever appeared so valuable in my eyes.

The mate of the vessel was brother-in-law to Mr. M'Fie, the manager. He had often seen me at Cane Grove; but, luckily for me, he did not then recollect me. I knew him, however, the moment I saw him, and I was in constant dread lest he should find me out, and inform against me. I was very careful not to let any word drop in his presence which might open his eyes. We sailed from

Grenada to St. Vincent's, to Mount Wynn estate, to take in some clothes which belonged to the mate, who was called Nichol; and I was in constant fear of detection till we arrived at Martinique. This was the first place where any opportunity occurred of writing to my friends. James Fox wrote a letter for me, and Nichol, by accident, saw it. A few days after he asked me if I knew any person on the Cane Grove estate? I said, I knew people there. He asked if I knew the manager? For fear of being discovered I denied any positive knowledge of him.

We took in a fresh cargo at Martinique, and sailed for Barbadoes; and having delivered our freight, we sailed for Trinity Bay to take in tiles. During the night we were cast away, and in great danger of losing our lives; for the ship went to pieces on the point, and we escaped from the fury of the waves by leaping from the wreck upon the rocks. If the ship had gone ashore a hundred yards higher, we must have been lost; it was the good

providence of God that saved us that night. We lost all our clothes and provisions, and were forced to remain three days upon a plantation, in a wretched condition.

After this misfortune, I went with Fox to the town of St. Pierre, and returned with him, in another vessel, to Trinidad, leaving Nichol in Martinique; but I met him again in Trinidad, though I took such pains to keep out of his way. He told me that he was going to St. Vincent's. I expected directly that he would inform against me; nor was I mistaken. He mentioned the vessel and the crew he had sailed with, and the manager instantly discovered that I was one of them. Nichol, finding the manager was anxious to have me back upon the estate, told him that he knew where to find me in Trinidad, and if he would give him twenty pounds currency he would bring me back by force. Before he could betray me into the hands of the manager, however, some persons came from Cane Grove and told me what Nichol in-

tended to do. I went directly to the judge and showed him my papers, and he said that I might remain as long as I pleased in Trinidad, for whilst I had those papers no person could claim me as a slave.

I got employ as soon as I could in another vessel, for I was always in fear of being disturbed and carried back to Cane Grove; and, having once tasted freedom, the thought of slavery grew more terrible to me. We sailed to St. Kitts, and took in cargo there, and then sailed for England in October, 1830. The ship was an English brig that belonged to Liverpool; and in seven weeks I landed at St. Catherine's docks, London, and found myself a stranger in this great city; but the hope of gaining my freedom made every thing pleasant to me.

When, however, I enquired for Mr. Wilson, my disappointment was great to find that he was dead, and that his property was left to his children, and in the hands of executors. It was a fortnight before I could find them out.

At last, I saw Mr. Warner Ottley and Mr. Forbes, two of the executors, to whom I told my case, and showed my manumission paper. They promised to look into the business, and settle it for me as well as they could, according to justice.

I have been now in England three months ; but as yet nothing has been done for me, except that Mr. Wilson's executors have consented to allow me something for subsistence while my case is under investigation. Some other benevolent persons gave me support since my arrival, or I should have starved. I still hope for the best. If Mr. Wilson's executors mean to walk right, they will not withhold my freedom from me. This is all I have now to say of myself.

It is not from what I have suffered in my own body as a slave, that I wish to publish this narrative, for I was better off than thousands of my poor countrymen—but I wished to relate not only my own case, but also all that I knew of slavery—all that I have

heard with my own ears, and beheld with my own eyes—in the hope that it may help to make known the condition of the poor negroes to the English people, and stir them up to do away with slavery altogether.

NOTE.—While these pages are passing through the press, the writer is informed, by the benevolent individuals who have interested themselves in Ashton's case, that they have been met in a very fair and candid spirit by Mr. Wilson's executors; but that it appears doubtful whether there is sufficient evidence, at least in this country, to support his claim to freedom. Oppressive and cruel as his seizure and re-enslavement by Mr. Wilson, after the lapse of ten years, must be considered, it seems not impossible that the planter may have had the law—the iniquitous *Colonial Law*—on his side; and the respectable executors, who now hold the property in trust for his children, cannot, it appears, guarantee Ashton's enfranchisement, except upon their own personal responsibility. They have, indeed, offered, if he chooses to return to St. Vincent's, to grant him a paper securing him from any molestation for twelve months from the attorneys on Mr. Wilson's property, to enable him, if means exist, legally to establish his entire freedom. But, honourable as are the intentions of these gentlemen, who,

under the circumstances, can venture to advise Ashton to place himself within the reach of West Indian *slave laws*? The only perfect security for his enfranchisement would be to lodge his purchase-money in the hands of an umpire in this country, upon a pledge from Mr. Wilson's executors to accept his price by appraisement, should he fail to establish his claim by the colonial law. While he remains in England, no doubt he is free; but here he is in danger of utter destitution—is anxiously longing to return to his colonial home and connections—and is suffering severely from the effects of exposure to an uncongenial climate.

P. S. *Feb 25.* Since the above note was put in type, poor Ashton's enfranchisement has been suddenly accomplished by the great Emancipator—DEATH. He was carried off by a rapid inflammatory complaint, and expired this day in the London Hospital, uttering, with his latest breath, some imperfect expressions about the "King of England," and "freedom to the slaves." *Requiescat!* He is now where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," and "the bondman is free from his master." "There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the Oppressor."—ED.

APPENDIX.

DEED OF MANUMISSION.

To all to whom these presents shall come, Daphne Crosbie, of the Island of St. Vincent, free black woman, sends greeting: Know ye, that for divers good causes and considerations me hereunto moving, and for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings currency to me in hand well and truly paid, have manumitted, enfranchised, and made free, and by these presents do manumit, enfranchise, and for ever set free from slavery and servitude, all those three negroes and two mulatto slaves, named Plassey, John Baptiste, Ashton, Margaret, and Archibald: to have and to hold unto the said Plassey, John Baptiste, Ashton, Margaret, and Archibald, their full freedom and emancipation from the day of the date hereof, for ever: so that neither me, the said Daphne Crosbie, my heirs, executors, and administrators, or any other person or persons claiming by, through, under, or in trust for me or any other person or persons, shall or may have or claim any right or title to the servitude of the said Plassey, John Baptiste, Ashton, Margaret, and Archibald, or in and to any interest that they or any of

them may hereafter acquire : but that the said Plassey, John Baptiste, Ashton, Margaret, and Archibald, may from henceforth remain and continue freed, manumitted, enfranchised, and for ever discharged of and from all manner of slavery and servitude whatever : giving and hereby granting unto the said Plassey, John Baptiste, Ashton, Margaret, and Archibald (as far forth as in me the said Daphne Crosbie lies) all the rights and privileges of free-born British subjects. And to the intent that these presents may be duly recorded in the proper office in the Island of Grenada, I the said Daphne Crosbie have constituted and appointed, and by these presents do constitute and appoint, Mr. John Grant, of the said Island, tinsmith, to be my true and lawful attorney, for me and in my name to appear before the Registrar of deeds of the said Island of Grenada, or his lawful deputy, then and there to acknowledge these presents, and the signature and seal thereto set and affixed, to be the signature and seal and act of me the said Daphne Crosbie, and to all other things needful and necessary in the premises. In witness whereof I have hereunto set and affixed my hand and seal this first day of June, one thousand eight hundred and twenty.

Her
(Signed) Daphne ~~X~~ Crosbie.
mark.

Signed, sealed, and delivered in presence of

(Signed) W. W. Thomson.
Dennis Crosbie.

Grenada.

Before me the Honourable Jeffrey Hart Bent, Esq., His Majesty's Chief Justice of the said Island and its dependencies, personally appeared Dennis Crosbie, free black man, one of the subscribing witnesses to the within deed of manumission, who, being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, maketh oath that he was present with W. W. Thomson, the other subscribing witness, and did see Daphne Crosbie sign (by making her mark), seal, execute, and deliver the same for the within purposes therein contained.

(Signed) DENNIS CROSBIE.

Sworn to before me this 23d day of May, 1821,

(Signed) Jeffrey Hart Bent, Chief Justice.

*Entered 23rd May, 1821, by
Dennis Crosbie.*

*Entered 11th May,
1822.*

Daphne Crosbie
to
Plassey and others.

Daphne Crosbie,
to
Plassey and others.

Manumission.
Grenada.

Manumission.
Saint Vincent.

Recorded in the Register Office of this island, this twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one.
— Rowley, D. Regr.

Recorded in the Secretary's Office of the said island in Liber Q, No. 2, page 162, and examined.
Thomas Gaskin,
Deputy Sec.

TESTIMONY OF THE REV. JOSEPH ORTON ON COLONIAL SLAVERY.

THE Rev. Joseph Orton, after a residence of about six years in Jamaica, as a Missionary in connexion with the Wesleyan Methodists, returned to England about eighteen months ago, in the hope, through the divine blessing, of re-establishing a debilitated constitution—shattered by the influence of an unhealthy climate—by incessant and anxious labours in his Christian duties—and, more than all, by the effects of outrageous persecution, from which he had barely escaped with his life. In August, 1828, he was imprisoned, by order of the local magistracy, along with his friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Whitehouse, in a fetid dungeon, which forms the jail of St. Ann's Bay. In the same jail, a short while previously, his brother Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Grimsdall, had been incarcerated for the same offence—namely, for preaching the blessed gospel of his Master to those outcasts from the pale of humanity—the despised and degraded Negro Slaves—and had there prematurely perished. Mr. Orton soon became so ill that his life was pronounced to be in danger also; and he, together with his brother Whitehouse, who was likewise unwell, would probably have been speedily added to the list of the Missionary Martyrs of our slave colonies, had they not been promptly relieved from the pestiferous dungeon, through the humanity of the Deputy Marshal, on his own responsibility; and they were honourably discharged shortly afterwards by the Chief Justice, on the ground of illegal imprisonment. The health of Mr. Orton was, however, so much affected, that he found it neces-

sary to repair without delay to England. (For the details of this transaction, see the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 43.)

"In the zealous discharge of his Missionary duties," says the able editor of the work just referred to, "Mr. Orton was necessarily brought into close contact with slavery, and had a full opportunity of estimating its real nature and effects. His courage and constancy, and at the same time his meekness, in circumstances of peculiar trial and of persecution; the admitted uprightness of his character, and his disinterested devotedness to the cause of Christian truth, are pledges for the correctness of his representations, especially as he has had full means of verifying them, so as to escape those illusions which a hasty and cursory view of the facts for which he makes himself responsible, might possibly have caused. We give, therefore, the substance of his personal testimony on this subject, with more than ordinary confidence; and with no less confidence do we recommend it to the attentive consideration of our readers."

These observations (the entire justice of which the writer of this notice has had good opportunities of ascertaining) are made in introducing Mr. Orton's testimony on Negro Slavery, delivered at the Ipswich Anti-Slavery Meeting, on the 24th of September, 1830. This important testimony is here subjoined, after being collated carefully with the printed report of another speech, delivered by the same competent witness, at a Public Meeting held at Bury St. Edmund's, on the 9th of November last. On this latter occasion, as appears from the Bury Newspaper, one of the most audacious opposers of the Anti-Slavery cause was present; but he ventured not to impugn or call in question a single word of Mr. Orton's statement. Let the reader now compare the account given by this conscientious Missionary, of the condition of the slaves on the sugar plantations of Jamaica, with that of Ashton Warner, relative to the field negroes of St. Vincent's, and judge whether the system be one that ought to be any longer tolerated by a civilized or Christian country.—Ed.

TESTIMONY OF THE REV. JOSEPH ORTON.

Mr. Orton said he came forward with much diffidence, particularly on account of the peculiar circumstances in which he stood. It had been his lot, as a Minister of the Gospel, to suffer from those who were opposed to the religious instruction of the slaves. He, however, could conscientiously disclaim any thing like vindictive feeling, and trusted that, in the midst of severe persecutions, he had been influenced by that Christian principle which led him to commiserate the condition of his worst persecutors, and sincerely to pray for those by whom he had been despitefully used. And he assured the meeting, that nothing short of a sense of duty, arising from an utter abhorrence of slavery, produced by personal observation, would have induced him to come forward in compliance with the pressing invitation he had received to lend his feeble aid to a cause which had for its object the extermination of a system so fraught with evil. He had had many painful opportunities of witnessing the horrors of slavery. He had heard the clanking of the chains of the poor negroes: he had listened to their heart-

rending shrieks under the lash of the whip; nor had he become callous to them, as might be the case with some long accustomed to view, and to participate in, and to profit by, such scenes of human misery. His hatred to it, as a most brutal system, had increased in proportion to the length of his acquaintance with it.

They were all agreed that slavery was *bad in principle*. How many of our fellow-men were deprived by it of the common rights of God's rational creatures! Having no property even in their own persons or in their families, parents and their offspring being the common chattels of their owners, they were subject to disposal, and liable to painful separations, at the mere caprice or convenience of the master. He had frequently witnessed, with feelings of the highest indignation, the sale of human beings in the public market, consisting chiefly of the Marshal's seizures for debt, upon whom violent hands had been laid under the most painful circumstances, and who were thus dragged to the market and sold to the highest bidder. Neither could the slave legally acquire property of any description; and thus he was made to endure more than the common curse of man. His brow sweats by excessive toil under a burning sun, where nature had provided, by rapid vegetation and the fruitfulness of the earth, for the incapacity of man intensely to toil in such a climate. The unhappy result was, that

thousands dragged out a miserable existence, and that there was a most prodigal waste of human life; and all this for the pecuniary advantage of a few individuals, the labourers themselves having nothing in the form of equivalent for such a cruel extortion of severe and uncompensated toil.

Slavery was not only *bad in principle*, but *cruel in practice*. Of this the British public heard something, but very partially, and they had been grievously misled by misrepresentations; though he felt disposed to give slave-owners, residing in England, credit for ignorance of many abuses practised towards their own slaves. But those who have had opportunities of witnessing slavery in its undisguised state, not in its holiday attire, not veiled by preparatory arrangements from the view of an expected visitor; such persons could alone see, and hear, and know, the horrors of slavery.

The excessive labour extorted from the slave is certainly one of the worst features of this cruel system. The toil of the slave was not so excessive for its violent exertion, as in point of constancy and rapidity of motion. A gang of from thirty to fifty men were placed together, some not so strong as others, though he admitted they were generally selected, as nearly as they could be, of equal strength; but many were often weak or diseased. These slaves were

placed in a line in the field, with drivers at equal distances, and were obliged to maintain that line throughout the day, so that those who were not quite so strong as the others were literally flogged up by the drivers; and this in a rapid and constant motion; *rapidity* was its characteristic. In carrying manure the practice was the same.*

Various statements had been given as to the number of hours the slave had to be employed for his master; he would state, and that without any fear of successful contradiction, that, calculating from the time the negro is called from his rest by the smack of the whip, or other signal, he is employed for his master, taking the average of the year round, from fifteen to sixteen hours every day. He had taken great pains in observing the time when the negroes were called out in the morning, and the time when they left the field. He had been in the habit of travelling much in the night, or early in the morning, and had frequently observed the negroes on the stir, and travelling to the field, between the hours of three and five o'clock; and had witnessed the flogging of slaves before five in the morning for not being earlier at their work. He had also seen them in the field, in crop-time, as late as nine or ten o'clock at night; and all this exclusive of the constant night-work going on during the crop in

* Compare this with Ashton's statement; see page 33. See also note at page 82.

the mill and boiling-house. During crop, from the time that they were called out till they left work was at least eighteen hours. This he stated without fear of refutation. During the other part of the year the average was at least thirteen or fourteen hours; making an average, as he had already stated, of from fifteen to sixteen hours per day, through the year. He maintained that this was cruel and excessive labour in a burning climate, where they well knew that such constant exertion was not necessary for subsistence.

To obtain such a quantity of labour coercion was indispensable, and the driver accordingly was always armed with a whip. It had been said that the whip was a mere symbol of office, but this was arrant trifling. The missionaries had stood by, almost boiling over with indignation, whilst the driver was summarily punishing and lacerating the bodies of his fellow negroes, without any other whites than themselves to witness it. And this was in addition to the numerous punishments for petty offences at the close of the day.

Even this might be more tolerable if the slave were remunerated for his toil, but not only was he not well provided for, but he was obliged to make the greatest sacrifices for his bare subsistence. Twenty-six days in the year only, besides Sundays, were allowed for the cultivation of their provision grounds. In the

Leeward Islands, he knew, the negroes were partly fed from their masters' stores, but it was not so in Jamaica. Slaves in Jamaica were not supported from the store-houses of the estate, but had allotments of land, generally mountainous ground of no value for the cultivation of the cane, which they must cultivate for their support. These negro-grounds were very frequently at a great distance from the place where they lived, varying from two to six or even ten or fifteen miles from their residence. To raise provisions on these grounds for their support, they were allowed by the law of the island one day in the fortnight (except in crop-time, when they had only the Sunday), having to travel to and from the distances stated; and he had known them to travel thirty miles, with a heavy load, on the Sunday, to sell the produce at a low rate, in order to obtain the little comforts they required. The consequence was, that a very considerable portion of their little time and strength was taken up in going backwards and forwards; add to which, in crop-time, which lasted nearly half the year, and during which they worked half the night as well as all the day, they seldom had an opportunity of going to their grounds when so distant, so that these frequently went to ruin, the provisions were stolen, and the negro was dispirited, and became quite reluctant to attempt to restore his land under such

discouraging circumstances. On such occasions, when they evinced reluctance to cultivate their grounds, they were flogged to them by the drivers. There was, however, a small portion of pickled herrings served out by the owner to them; and occasionally, to women advanced in pregnancy, and children, an allowance of corn-meal or oat-meal.

It was said that the planters supplied their wants when sick; and it would be bad policy indeed if the same attention were not paid to them which any one present would pay to his horse if he were ill; but the negroes would often complain for some time before they were admitted to the hospital, or *hot-house*, and that, frequently, after being punished as idle for complaining. The hospital was almost invariably the prison of the estate: they were generally put into the stocks and allowed to lie on an inclined boarding—to prevent their taking too much exercise, he had been told; but the impression had always been made upon him, and upon the negroes also, that they were thus treated to make the *hot-house* as undesirable as possible. In visiting the negroes' huts he had witnessed scenes of distress almost beyond conception. He had found old disabled negroes in houses nearly falling over their heads, with bodies almost eaten up by disease,—so sorely affected with scorbutic humours that in some instances their limbs were literally rotting from

their bodies. It must be admitted that, occasionally, this might be partly owing to neglect on the part of the negroes, but in most instances it arose from the constitution being injured by excess of labour and poorness of living. When he had inquired if their masters did not supply their wants, the answer was—"No, massa, me done up; me ask for salt, me ask for salt; but massa never give salt;" (their disease is usually scorbutic)—"me have nothing but what piccaninny bring to me." In the streets of Jamaica it was common to see old negroes begging, whose masters had had the benefit of their youth and strength.

Slavery was also most injurious in its moral influences; it corrupted the morals, induced idleness, theft, debauchery, and duplicity; all of which strongly characterised the negro slave, particularly petty theft (if so it may be called), it being difficult to convince a slave that there was any moral evil in taking his master's provisions.

Slavery interfered too with the religious privileges and advantages of the negroes, depriving them of their Sabbaths, which must necessarily be occupied in cultivating their grounds or bringing down their provisions to market; and too frequently many are employed for a great portion of the Sabbath attending to sundry matters upon the estates. The apprehension of punishment expressly inflicted for attending the means of

grace operates very seriously against the religious instruction of the slave. Many very distressing and well-authenticated instances of such persecutions were upon record, some of which had come under his own immediate notice. By this religious persecution the slaves were deprived of those blessings which alone could render their condition supportable. The negro in general was quiet, cowed, and dispirited by oppression: why then should he be restrained in his religious principles? By the provisions of the slave-law of Jamaica, mutual instruction amongst the slaves was entirely prohibited, and this law had in many cases been most rigorously and painfully enforced. There could not be a greater hindrance than this to religious instruction; many slaves, from previous instruction, being quite competent to teach, and in general astonishingly apt in communicating knowledge to their fellow negroes.

In fact, in a thousand forms, over which, under existing circumstances, there could be no control, did the hateful system of slavery obtrude itself upon the full and proper discharge of ministerial duties, and the religious privileges of the slave. He was quite aware that many gentlemen residing in England were desirous to afford every facility for the religious instruction of their slaves; but their benevolent designs were thwarted by their agents, and they were in fact

deceived, in many instances, by statements the most incorrect. It became therefore the duty of every man, and especially of those under whose observation many of those evils had passed, on the principles of common humanity and Christianity, to lift up their voice against a practice so unjust in itself, and so baneful in its tendencies. They all knew that the missionaries had been persecuted to martyrdom, and Christianity had been compared to a cankerworm which would eat out the fruits of slavery. The missionaries had been charged with seducing the negroes into dangerous notions of the rights of men, and with being disturbers of the peace; but the charge had been honourably disproved in the courts of law, and had fallen with double vengeance on the heads of their accusers. His brother Grimsdall, whose memory would ever be dear to him, had, however, sunk a victim to this persecution. Many of the negroes had been cruelly punished for attending the worship of God; and on complaining to the Magistrates had been sent to the workhouse, and flogged at going in and coming out, as disaffected. Whilst confined in the gaol at St. Ann's Bay, for preaching to the slaves, he had witnessed barbarities beyond description in the workhouse yard which it overlooked. The governor of the house of correction stood over and watched with the greatest indifference the cutting up of the negroes.

Night and day the crack of the whip was constantly heard. During the ten days of his confinement he (Mr. O.) scarcely ever slept. One poor woman he saw laid on her stomach, with two men holding her arms, and a third her head, whilst another Herculean fellow was lashing her naked body. Such occurrences as these *ought* to cause excitement, and called upon them to use every lawful means to accomplish the very speedy and utter abolition of slavery.

After what he had stated, it would be preposterous to compare the condition of the slaves with that of the peasantry of this country. He admitted that a few were well treated; but was this a reason for suffering the vast majority to remain in their present condition? In the last few months he had travelled through this kingdom—and he lamented to see the distress of the English poor. But any attempt to compare the worst-treated of our peasantry with the worst-treated slaves, must be grounded either upon profound ignorance or incurable prejudice. Admitting however (for the sake of argument) that their sufferings were equally great, was it a reason for keeping our fellow creatures in bondage—for refusing to bestir ourselves for the relief of distress at a distance, because there was distress at home? Ought we not rather to believe that Providence, by whose power the affairs of all nations were regulated, had permitted this dis-

tress in our own country, as a just judgment for our indifference to the oppression of the negroes? And might not our conscience tell us—"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear him?"

NOTE. In comparing the account given by Mr. Orton, at page 74, of the amount of daily labour exacted from the field negroes, with the statement of Mr. Thorpe on the same topic at page 89, an apparent difference of about two hours will be perceived; but this is only an apparent not a real discrepancy between the testimonies of these two competent witnesses. Mr. Orton includes in his estimate the time consumed by the slaves in going to and from the field, in collecting grass for the cattle, cooking their food, and other *extra* labours; whereas Mr. Thorpe speaks only of the period they work *in gang*, under the driver. Both accounts are correct; but Mr. Orton's gives, on this point, the completest view of the case. In the second volume of Mr. Stephen's excellent work, recently published, entitled "The Slavery of the British West India Colonies delineated," the reader will find the murderous excess of slave labour unanswerably demonstrated from the evidence of the Colonial advocates themselves. See also, for full and authentic information on this point, and on the treatment of the slaves generally, the publications of Rev. Messrs. Bickell and Cooper, Godwin's Lectures, and the Anti-Slavery Reporter, *passim*.—ED.

TESTIMONY OF THE REV. JOHN THORPE

ON COLONIAL²¹¹ SLAVERY.

THE Rev. John Thorpe, now the Curate of Wigginton, in the county of Oxford, occupied the situation of Curate in the parish of St. Thomas in the East, in Jamaica, under the Rev. Mr. Trew, the Rector, from 1826 to 1829. At several public meetings, and especially at Cheltenham, on the 7th of October, 1830, and at Liverpool, on the 25th of January last, he has taken occasion to bear his testimony to the nature and effects of Colonial Slavery as it exists at this moment in this the largest slave colony in his Majesty's dominions. Those who have the happiness of knowing the sound judgment and unimpeachable integrity of this pious and exemplary clergyman, and the spotless character he has borne both at home and abroad, will best appreciate the value of that testimony, the substance of which is here laid before the reader with an entire conviction of its truth, derived not only from the confidence reposed in his deliberate statement of facts, but from the perfect agreement of that statement with the mass of evidence on the same subject which has already appeared in other authentic publications.

Mr. Thorpe said that his views of slavery arose from his constant residence in an agricultural part of the island of Jamaica. In stating those views, and the facts by which they were supported, he disavowed all hostility to the planters, many of whom he respected—his enmity was to the system, which, with a corrupt

foundation, was upheld by corrupt means. He would premise that the law regards the slave as a mere chattel—he may be bought, sold, transferred, levied upon, or bequeathed. The Jamaica Gazettes teem with advertisements announcing the sales of negroes, many of whom have been seized by virtue of the Deputy Marshal's writ, and some given to pay arrears of taxes due by the estate to which the slaves may belong. Few owners reside on their own properties, but manage them by an attorney (or land-agent), who has the general care of several—under him is an overseer (or bailiff) for each estate—under the overseer are book-keepers—and under these as many drivers as there are gangs of negroes. The drivers are blacks, the others whites.

Such are the actual managers—now for their mode of management. This, briefly, is compelling the slaves to work by the cart-whip, an instrument with which a very severe wound may be inflicted. It was a horrible instrument, consisting of a strong handle, with a long whip formed of the hide of the steer, and having attached to it a thin lash made of the tough fibres of a vegetable substance called *penguin*; and in the hand of an expert driver it is capable of inflicting most severe punishment. Indeed it lacerates the flesh most terribly. The colonial law allows the whites, except the book-keepers, to order thirty-nine

lashes to be inflicted, with this instrument, on any slave, provided the effect of former punishment shall not remain, and ten to be given by the drivers, if in their opinion the punishment is called for. The mode of administering it is, by holding the victim down on the ground, and, as he lies extended, the lashes are inflicted on his bared body. After this, which may be called the legal flogging, the poor wretch, Mr. T. has understood, is not unfrequently scourged with prickly branches of ebony, quantities of which are collected for this atrocious purpose.—Mr. T. knew an overseer in the neighbourhood, who, having neglected his business, was reprimanded by the attorney, which so irritated him that he sought, amongst the slaves under his charge, some objects on whom to wreak his vengeance. Three were singled out, and received a tremendous punishment. They complained to the attorney; who, on inquiry, found them blameless in the matter. The overseer was dismissed; but he was appointed to another and a larger estate.—On passing through a town, Mr. T. heard cries: he went to the spot, and found a negress tied up by the hands, while a driver was flogging her. On asking the white man, who stood by, what was her fault, he replied he did not know—his employer had sent her there to be flogged.—A brother clergyman left Mr. T.'s house early one morning, and, missing his road, unexpectedly arrived at an estate where he

saw the overseer "occupying himself with flogging a number of women."—Mr. T. knew of a slave who from severe punishment died. The coroner's inquest sat. It was endeavoured to be proved that he died from disease: but the case was so barefaced that the coroner and jury, themselves planters, gave a verdict of wilful murder. The man was brought to trial and was acquitted,—from what cause he could not precisely say; but he believes from the inadmissibility of the evidence of the negroes, who alone witnessed the fact. Mr. T. afterwards saw this man with a party of his fellow-overseers, received into their society as if nothing had happened.

In every parish there is a workhouse, or more properly a gaol; the receptacle of the negroes convicted of idle or refractory conduct, and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour. He never could forget his sensation on entering, soon after his landing, one of these miserable abodes. The filth was disgusting—the dens dark; while their wretched inmates, driven out, and arranged on each side for inspection, in their half naked state,—their wild stare,—and woeful appearance—scarcely resembled human beings. But the workhouse is not for these only, but any owner or his deputy may send a negro there, when anxious to give him a severer punishment than ordinary, with an order to that effect, which never fails to be executed, and

generally without any inquiry being instituted as to the offence.—He knew a carpenter-slave, who, being pressed by his attorney to labour in the field, refused, on the ground of its being unusual thus to employ a tradesman, his age and infirmities being superadded; and stated that, if he would allow him, as he had formerly done, to hire himself out by the day, he would bring any reasonable wages he required. The attorney would not swerve from his purpose, and the slave, persisting in his refusal, was confined to the workhouse, and twice severely flogged; besides being worked with the gaol gang, who, chained together in pairs by a collar fastened to the neck, repair to their daily labour, attended of course by the driver, who is not sparing of his cart-whip. Mr. T. saw him use it on one poor infirm fellow, who, not keeping up the trot at which they were going, in changing the scene of their labour, received this sensible hint from his merciless task-master.

One observation he must be allowed to make; many overseers might be humane and abhor an act of cruelty; what he complained of was the intrusting of arbitrary power to men of like passions with ourselves; and he adduced these facts as its necessary results. For let it be remembered that the cases he had mentioned came incidentally to his knowledge, and

afforded a fair specimen of what is constantly recurring, and what must recur so long as this uncontrolled power, the very essence and support of slavery, is committed to the planter. Such facts served to lift up the curtain with which the planters studiously veil the cruelties of their system, and to expose to our view some of its terrible enormities, the full amount of which are known only to Him who maketh inquisition for blood, and who forgetteth not one cry of these poor oppressed Africans.

Much is said of the careful attention paid to the sick; he believed there might be attention paid on properties possessing a humane attorney or owner; but he had seen hospitals which, from their heat and effluvia, he should deem far more likely to create disorders than to cure them. Some of the sick were lying on benches made for their reception, others on the floor, with no covering but their tattered clothes, and no couch but the bare boards. Then their aged people are made watchmen, some of whom suffer great privations, and who live on remote and scattered parts of the estate, in miserable sheds, not so good as gypsy tents, to guard the provisions and sugar canes of the property; while even their hoary hairs, in case of supposed offence through neglect or otherwise, do not protect them from the merciless lacerations of the

cart-whip. He knew one, formerly a valuable slave, who was sent to a distance, and almost starved, that he might be prevented preaching to his fellows.

The slaves, divided into gangs, each gang attended by a driver and his cart-whip, work from the earliest dawn of the morning to the decline of day, averaging about thirteen hours daily of field labour;* out of which time half an hour is allowed for breakfast, and two hours in the middle of the day; but this time he had known abridged under a press of business, and much of it was consumed in going from and to the scene of their often distant labours. It was not, however, of their daily labour he complained so much as that during the crop-time, which lasts generally about six months of the year; this labour is protracted on most estates through every alternate, and on others, where slaves are more numerous, through every third, night. This is a cruel part of the system, and must tend to shorten life; especially as, when heated by labour, they are exposed to the chilling and unwholesome night air and heavy dews, which not unfrequently engender decline and hasten death.

Another crying evil of the system is that a slave cannot manumit himself, even though through industry he may have saved a sufficiency for his ransom. If he be a respectable and faithful slave, he is told he

* See note at page 82.

cannot be spared; and even where a slave is permitted to purchase his freedom, he is often obliged to obtain another to fill up his place.

It may be asked, what compensation has the negro? His owner allows him weekly six salt herrings, a woman the same, a child three, with a few yards of coarse woollen and linen cloth yearly, barely sufficient to cover them, with a hat for the men, and a handkerchief for the women. Then a certain portion of land, generally unavailable for other purposes (certainly for sugar canes), on which the slave is to cultivate his vegetable provisions; only twenty-six days in the year are allowed him for this cultivation, which obliges him to trespass on the Sabbath. It sometimes happens that the negroes raise a little poultry, and occasionally kill a pig, which, with their surplus provisions, they bring to the market to sell or barter for salt meat, fish, or better clothing than their allowance affords.

The decrease of the negro population is most fearful; but can we be surprised that the rigorous exaction of labour, through thirteen hours of every day—and for five more, making eighteen hours a day, during half of the year—with no rest on the Sabbath to recruit wasted strength, besides the attention to domestic concerns, which must increase fatigue and abridge the hours of repose—can we be surprised that this exhaustion of strength should produce as its result misery and death?

It is proved, by authentic documents, that the maroons of Jamaica rapidly increase—and what does this show but that, within the atmosphere of freedom, the principle of animal life is vigorous and prolific, while within that of slavery it sickens, and withers, and dies.

The market-day in Jamaica is the Sabbath; the consequent desecration of this holy day is awful. Often had he returned from an almost empty church, and passed the market, where hundreds of slaves were collected, merged in all the secularities of life, and indulging in all the vices of their corrupt nature. After stating this, the degraded state of their morals may be easily imagined. Marriage is comparatively unknown, and illicit intercourse prevails. In a recent report of a society established in his parish, for the religious instruction of the slaves, it is mentioned as a cause of exultation, that, during the two past years, since the society had existed, the number of legitimate children had increased, so that they were then in the proportion of one to nine of the whole black population. This one fact speaks volumes; and this debased state of morals is fostered by the evil example of the whites, who almost all live in sin. The white planter lives at the great house of the estate, where reside also a number of females of colour, most of them belonging to the property. The licentiousness prevailing in consequence, he need not depict; but he would excite

the sympathy of the females before him in behalf of their degraded sisters, who were constrained by their bonds to dwell in these haunts of iniquity, and became, from a moral necessity, the victims of their master's passions—who, by withholding instruction, concealed from them the guilt of their conduct, while they hid their atrocities from the people of England by specious names. And, to undeceive many, he would observe, that a *housekeeper* is considered a necessary appendage to a white man's establishment, an individual whom, in England, we should designate by a far more just though more opprobrious title. If such, then, be their moral, what must be their religious state? True, the gospel has visited the heart of many a negro, but their numbers bear no comparison to the mass of the uninstructed; and how should they, when religious instruction is so much discouraged? In his parish (St. Thomas' in the East), *the most improved in the whole island*, there were, indeed, fifty-four estates permitting the ministers of the established church to communicate religious instruction; but, with the exception of three, stipulating that it should be merely oral, and in all cases appointing *one half hour* once a week during the noontide, a time when, from weariness and hunger, few could avail themselves of it. In fact, as a Jamaica proprietor, well acquainted with the operation of this system, told him, "It was a mere

farce." But even this instruction, thus limited and deficient, was actually denied to 11,451 slaves, on forty-six estates in the parish, who enjoyed no opportunity of instruction whatever. Nor can the negro receive instruction to any practicable extent on the Sabbath. One of the members of the House of Assembly stated, "that the slave must work on that day or starve;" and the scantiness of Mr. Thorpe's congregation, amounting, on an average, to only eighty out of 6000 at least, while, at the same time, they were anxious for instruction, confirms the statement. Remember, then, the slave is considered as a chattel, liable to the cruelty of the cart-whip, and the chains of the workhouse—that he endures excessive and unrequited toil—that he cannot manumit himself—that he is demoralised and brutalised—and then acknowledge that slavery is a monster, whose existence ought no longer to be allowed.

The reverend gentleman then observed, that what he had seen of the industry of the negro, when employed for himself, fully proved that free labour was practicable, and that, were the negro freed, he would not starve as some feared. He also related an affecting anecdote of a female slave, who, having been stolen in Africa, and sold in Jamaica, was, under the usual treatment of the planter, hateful, hating, dishonest, and revengeful; she became the property of a clergy-

man, under whose mild treatment and Christian instruction her dispositions altered, exhibiting all the faithfulness, tenderness, and sympathy, of which the heart is capable.

TESTIMONY OF THE REV. J. M. TREW ON COLONIAL SLAVERY.

THE Rev. J. M. Trew, a clergyman of the Church of England, well known for his religious zeal and high respectability of character, was Rector of St. Thomas in the East, in Jamaica, (the same parish of which the Rev. Mr. Thorpe was Curate) and was peculiarly distinguished, during his residence in the Island, for the able, and earnest, and successful, discharge of his pastoral functions. After a residence of eleven years, he has recently returned to this country ; and about six months ago he published a pamphlet under the assumed designation of " Ignotus," entitled " Nine Letters to the Duke of Wellington, on Colonial Slavery." This pamphlet (of which, as I learn from good authority, Mr. Trew has since explicitly acknowledged himself to be the author) contains most important evidence on Colonial Slavery ; and I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to recommend its entire perusal to those who feel an interest in this great question, while I enrich my own little volume by extracting freely from its contents. As the author is entirely unconnected with the Anti-Slavery Society, and in fact appears to be actuated with some sort of prejudice (probably imbibed in the colonies) in regard to their proceedings, his testimony on Negro Slavery is the less liable to any suspicion of party spirit. Indeed his scheme of *immediate amelioration*, and *ultimate emancipation*, differs widely from that now advocated by the leading Abolitionists, and appears to me liable to very grave objections. It appears to be now clearly demonstrated that the monstrous iniquities of Colonial Slavery are not capable of any effectual mitigation ; the only practical remedy for this moral and political gangrene is unsparing ex-

cision—in plain words, *early and total abolition*. But, be that as it may (and I beg to refer the reader to his own pamphlet for the full development of Mr. Trew's views on the subject), his testimony in regard to the actual condition of the slaves, and the appalling evils of slavery as now existing in our Colonies, is not less valuable than seasonable at the present crisis; and will serve very appropriately to complete the picture of the West India system, which I have thus endeavoured to combine from the authentic sketches of various eye-witnesses. ED.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

THE humanity of the slave-code of the West Indies, and especially of Jamaica, has often been the theme of admiration amongst colonists, and not unfrequently trumpeted forth, as a set-off against those numerous cases of cruelty and oppression which have been alleged against them. Nor can it be denied that the slave-code of Jamaica contains in it provisions affecting the slave, which, as far as they go, *seem* to have the most humane tendency. This has ever been the policy of the colonist, to preserve on the face of the statute-book, regulations affecting the amelioration of the slave, intended rather to be *politically* than *practically* acted upon—regulations which, when viewed from a distance by the mother country, would lead to the supposition that the utmost precautions were adopted, which human ingenuity could devise, for the protection of the slave, and the just administration of the laws

affecting his happiness. Thus far there has been a semblance of justice. To a certain extent, at least, there has been no unwillingness to legislate. Clause after clause has been appended to the slave-code; but the sentiment so commonly prevailing amongst the colonists themselves, that such an act has passed in order to please the people of England, will readily account why the law, when framed, has so often become obsolete, or a mere dead letter. It is but a few years since a member of the Jamaica Assembly, now no more (Mr. Stewart, of Trelawney), on being a good deal jeered respecting a clause which he proposed introducing into the slave law, relating to the protection of the Sabbath, and imposing a penalty on persons working their sugar mills on that day, unhesitatingly and candidly replied, "Let the bill pass, and I shall be glad to know who shall prevent my doing as I please on my own estate on that day." So much for colonial legislation. The bill passes into a law, but its provisions are seldom enforced—and why?—The administration of the law is confided to men as likely as any others to depart from its requirements—to men whose *private interests* are so interwoven, the one with the other, as to throw a stumbling-block of no ordinary magnitude in the way of the most conscientious amongst them, leading them to depart from their *public duty*. Let the colonists be spoken of with the

highest respect ; concede to them whatsoever is excellent and whatsoever is honourable in man : but such is the fact, that consistently with their *private interests*, the colonists *cannot*, and the colonists *dare not*, administer the provisions of even the existing slave-code, *as fully* and *as honourably* as is consistent with impartial justice. The assertion is not made unadvisedly. The magistracy of Jamaica, in the absence from the island of more than nineteen-twentieths of the proprietors, is confided to whom ?—to attorneys, the agents of absentees ; to overseers, those on whom devolve more immediately the care and management of an estate ; to jobbers, a class of men who do not themselves cultivate any of the staple commodities of the island, but hire their slaves to the planter usually for the purpose of digging cane-holes, or accomplishing the severer labour of the estate ; to medical men, to one of whom may pertain the practice of many estates, and the care of several hundred slaves ; and to merchants, &c. Now, how is it possible, making every allowance for human nature, that these men, whose interests are so inseparably connected and interwoven with one another, can be supposed to administer impartial justice to the slave ? Justice has ever been represented to the world as blindfold, and holding the scales of mercy with an unerring hand ; and it has ever been the boast of Britain, that her judgment-seat

has been preserved uncorrupted, and that the constitution of the land has thrown such a barrier around it as to preserve it unimpeachable and above suspicion. But what a contrast do the colonies present to this ! There, a slave is cruelly treated by his master. The master, let it be supposed, is an attorney or an overseer. The slave applies to the nearest magistrate. The magistrate is a jobber, a doctor, or a merchant. The first is employed, by complainant's master, to labour his cane-field ; the second, to visit his sick ; and the third, to supply lumber or other necessities for the estate. Is it probable that any one of these men will be possessed of so much moral courage, as to induce them, in the very teeth of their own interests, and amidst the persecution of their neighbours, to prosecute the offender ; or would they not be much more likely to shift from their own shoulders the hearing of a complaint, or the meddling with an affair, which could promise them nothing but the loss of friends or money, together with the stigma of the whole fraternity of planters ? No one will presume to say, that there may not be exceptions to such a rule as this, and especially where men's interests are not involved to such a degree as to leave them more at liberty to act from principle ; but so long as such avenues are open to abuse, it never can, let men dissemble as they may, with any degree of honesty, be stated, either that jus-

tice now is impartially administered to the slave, or that *it can* be so administered to him, under existing circumstances.

NEGRO EVIDENCE.

There are two points which seem imperiously to demand the admission of negro evidence, viz.—The protection of the slave *in his property, and in his person*. It is no solid argument against the measure to say, that because slaves are seldom dispossessed of their property by arbitrary or cruel masters, that therefore there should not be a law to protect him in the enjoyment of it. Every body knows, that as matters now stand in the slave colonies (with the exception of those two or three inferior islands where the right of giving evidence has been conceded to the negro), any free man may with impunity, openly or covertly, rob the slave of his lawful goods, or rather of the goods which by law should belong to him, without any redress. It matters little that public opinion would denounce the man (as certainly it would) who would be base enough to take advantage of this acknowledged defect in the law, whilst the fact stands recorded on the face of the every-day proceed-

ings of West India courts, that the negro's evidence, were it tendered in attestation of any flagrant wrong committed against his property, would *go for nothing*, whilst the oath of the very meanest freeman, not disqualified by actual crime, one of the most abject of his species, and differing from the negro in complexion only, would go to punish the invader of his rights, (though he were the most powerful of the land,) who had wantonly abused his power; and yet must the slave, however respectable in character, or however decent in demeanour (and not a few amongst them are so), submit unredressed to the loss of his little all.

But this evil, great as it may appear, and pregnant with injury to the slave, is yet far outweighed in the comparison, when it is contrasted with the injury the slave may sustain from the infliction of his *personal wrongs*.

He may be flogged, how and when, and to what extent, his master pleases; nor would his own evidence avail, though it were ever so faithfully corroborated by his fellow servants, and they too of the most unblemished reputation, to convict, much less to punish, either the merciless hand that dealt the blow, or him by whose commands the limits of the law have been violated. Nor is this all. In the absence of his testimony, the slave is yet subject to another, and to a

more grievous debasement. His wife may be wrested from his embraces by some savage sensualist to become the mistress of another; his child, yet preserved by a father or a mother's care, from the contamination of vice, may, for the same base design, be torn with violence from his roof; and the only friend, in the absence of all human consolation, to whom he can appeal for succour, is that Omniscient Being who, though clothed with the majesty of omnipotence, has yet an ear of pity open to the negro's cry, and will hear and answer him. Can that system be right, which opens an avenue to the perpetration of such appalling crimes, and such boundless abuses? Assuredly it cannot. But you will be told that cases of this kind are extreme, and rarely happen, and that in all matters affecting his real welfare, or the exercise of any abuse of power towards him, the slave has an appeal to the Council of Protection, and that by this lawfully constituted assembly his grievances will be faithfully adjudicated. But how can this be? The Council of Protection resists the evidence of the slave. Let them be men of the most undoubted honour, or possessed of the most melting benevolence, they cannot go beyond the prescribed boundaries of the law. They may hear his complaint, to pity the remediless predicament of the unhappy sufferer—but the law has made him a slave, and the law rejects his testimony.

But again, say some, this also is to suppose an extreme case, and one which is by no means of common occurrence. Will not the negro *sometimes* be able to adduce other proof than his own? Some free person in the more humble walk of life, who may have been an eye-witness to his sufferings, and in whose case there does not exist any moral disability to affect his testimony? In reply to this, it need only be observed, that whenever a man purposes being guilty of an abuse of power, he will carefully watch both his time and his opportunity for doing so. He will take good heed to guard against any stretch of authority in the presence of those by whose evidence he can be made responsible for all his actions to the laws of the land. To mention, however, a case in point. Pending the examination of witnesses, in a committee of the Jamaica House of Assembly a few years ago, on the subject of negro evidence, a question was put on oath by the chairman, Mr. Reynolds, (one of the most indefatigable supporters of the negro's claims,) to a reverend gentleman then under examination, to this effect—"Have you ever known an instance in which the ends of public justice have been defeated through the inadmissibility of negro evidence?" The answer was—"I have." The individual was then called upon to state the particulars of it; which he did, nearly as follows—"In the parish where I reside, the following case was lately brought

before the Council of Protection, and came under my own immediate observation. A white man, the owner of a small plantation, sought to seduce from the path of virtue a young woman of colour, *the natural child of his own father, but a slave*. The girl, taught by her mother (who had been instructed by the missionaries in the fundamental truths of religion) the sinfulness of an act which would be rendered doubly heinous by the relative situation of the parties, refused to listen to his solicitations. The monster (for the name of a man can hardly be assigned to him) placed the girl in the stocks, and renewed his entreaties. This, however, produced no other effect on the mind of the unhappy female, than to induce her more strenuously than ever to resist his importunities. At last, as a dernier resort, flogging was had recourse to, and the poor prisoner was most unmercifully punished. But every artifice that villany could contrive was in vain. Virtue triumphed over vice, and the poor girl was finally released from her confinement. On regaining her liberty, the first use she made of it was to apply to a magistrate; who, shocked at the cruelty of the treatment she had received, and to his own credit, summoned a Council of Protection forthwith to hear her story. It was simple, and well authenticated; but, it *was the story of a slave*. Gladly would the Council of Protection have punished the monster; for the members of it

were fully persuaded of the truth of the girl's statements; but the law forbade them: and thus, not only was justice impeded, but guilt of the most appalling and aggravated character suffered to escape." What terms are sufficiently strong to mark the detestation of every rational man to a case like this?—to which it were impossible to find a parallel, but in the annals of slavery. And yet this part of the evidence taken before the Committee of the Jamaica Assembly, does not appear on the face of their printed minutes; and, on inquiring why it was not reported, I am informed that a discussion arose in the committee, as to the propriety of expunging this part of the evidence; and that it was expunged from the minutes accordingly—a member at the same time observing, "Are we not cutting a rod to break our own heads?" Thus, through the inadmissibility of slave evidence, may the most abandoned and profligate acts be perpetrated with impunity, against the person of the slave, by any free man; and though it were even carried to the very utmost limits of human barbarity, and though death itself were to be the issue of the event, still the culprit is accountable to no earthly tribunal, though the act were verified by the oath of one hundred slaves.

But a further proof may be adduced, of the necessity for the immediate admission of the testimony of slaves;

it is to be found in the report of a late trial, in the island of Jamaica, of sundry slaves for the murder of their master. The case is reported at length in the *Jamaica Public Advertiser*, of September last. The editor, when noticing the subject, pertinently remarks, "This day's paper contains a report of a trial for murder. Rarely has a case of such extreme atrocity come before the public of Jamaica. The deceased was a free person of colour. He was a married man. The cold-blooded, revolting murder was perpetrated in the presence of a crowd of slaves; and, as is charged by the *moral* evidence of the slaves, *who were executed*, some free people were accomplices; and, horrid to relate, one (*his own wife*) was a witness of the deed, and incited to the crime:—but we will go no farther." It appears from the report of this trial, that the master of these slaves was a man overwhelmed in debt; and that the sheriff's officer or marshall had in his possession sundry writs for the seizure of his chattels. His wife and family, from what reason it does not appear, formed a design against his life; and, in order to effect their horrid purpose, they set to work upon the minds of the slaves, saying that if their master should survive beyond a certain day, they would be seized by the sheriff's officer, and themselves and their families sold, and perhaps separated for ever. The plot succeeded; and the unfortunate slaves, maddened

by the anticipation of a final bereavement of all that earth held dear to them, perpetrated the cruel deed. Justice, however, speedily overtook them : they were tried, condemned, and executed. At the place of suffering, the unhappy men, when placed on the scaffold, declared that, during the time of the murder, *the mistress and her sons were present*, walking up and down in the piazza ; and that when their master awoke from his sleep, crying, help ! help ! the same persons were engaged in encouraging the negroes (having previously given them rum to drink), telling them to seize their master ; and that they seized and murdered him accordingly. But the concluding testimony of these dying men remains yet to be noticed ; and truly it is most appalling. Just as they were about being launched into the eternal world, they spoke as follows to the surrounding multitude—" Tell massa, thanky—tell him thanky. Tell misses, and old misses, thanky—for do them bring us to this. Do them bring us here. Them cheat we. Them say we must kill massa, else them would punish us, and marshall would take and sell every one of we. But we pray every body to pray God to forgive them."

Here is a case of the most unheard-of cruelty covered by the absence of negro evidence ; for, admitting the criminality of the slaves to the fullest possible extent, yet surely the instigators of so foul a

conspiracy ought first to have paid the forfeit of their own lives to the offended laws of the country. But the freeman escapes the vengeance of the law, and the poor, deceived, and semi-barbarous slave, meets with an end, the moral guilt of which, if there be a God in heaven, will grind the freeman to powder.

It does indeed appear most paradoxical that this creature man, when in a state of slavery, though his evidencce will not be received in a matter involving in it the interest of a freeman for a single farthing, will yet be permitted to testify against his fellow-slave, and upon that evidence, which in the one case is rejected, though the matter at issue concerned the veriest trifle, will his fellow-slave be doomed to suffer the utmost limits of the law. It has been the invariable custom to put slaves to death (as was the case in the instance before us) on the evidence of slaves. Surely this is to form but a low estimate of the value of the life of a fellow-creature, that he who would not be believed on oath in a matter affecting the life of his master's dog, will yet be believed in a matter which involves in it consequences the most awful—perhaps the destinies of a brother throughout eternity. If the slave be unfit to testify in the one case, is he not still more disqualified for doing so in the other?—or, if he be acknowledged as of sufficient maturity in understanding and moral worth to give evidence in the latter,

should he not, upon every principle of reason, and expediency, and humanity, be at once and for ever privileged to bear witness in the former?

COMPULSORY MANUMISSION.

In my present letter I do not propose to pursue this subject farther than to show, that if the planter look for justice in compensation, the negro has unquestionably a yet higher claim to justice likewise. Were the British legislature, in the height of her benevolence, to say to the West India planter, "Here is an equivalent for your property; we are satisfied with the injustice, as well as the inhumanity, of those barbarous laws which gave you a property in your fellow-creature—here is an indemnity for you!" who is there, after this, that would presume to contend for the planter's right any longer over his slave? He kept the negro as a hostage, till the party pledging should come forward to redeem him; but this effected, his right to control the negro ceases for ever. Now, if this principle be admitted as just and reasonable by the planter, (and who amongst them would not do so?) surely then, each individual negro who can satisfy the demands of his master, by laying down a price for his

purchase, such as any disinterested party may pronounce fair and reasonable, ought, by parity of reasoning, to possess the same inalienable right to freedom? If justice be what the planter contends for, and the slave, or any one for him, will lay down the price at which he is valued, surely there ought no longer to arise a question as to the claim of the negro, upon every principle of fair dealing, and even upon the planter's own showing, to be set free for ever. Yet, even against this measure, though bearing the impress of his own beloved *justice* upon it, the planter contends. He alleges that, by passing an act for the compulsory manumission of slaves, you deprive him of his most valuable labourers; of his tradesmen, his drivers, and of those in whom alone he can place implicit confidence:—that, by leaving the inferior slaves upon his hands, the work of the plantation is impeded, his capital rendered less valuable, and that, in fine, inevitable ruin awaits him. He will also allege that, in order to procure the means of purchasing their freedom, a powerful temptation will be thrown in the way of the slave, inclining him to rob his master; that thefts will be multiplied, and that dishonesty, disorder, and crime will be the necessary consequences resulting from such a privilege. But there cannot be a pretext invented more illusory than this. The truth is, that there are but few slaves on any estate, and in some

there is not an individual, who would be able to pay down their estimated value ; and even upon the supposition that funds could be raised, for the purpose of purchasing the majority of those who may be ranked amongst the more deserving, would not this produce an effect quite contrary to the anticipated result of the planter, by proving a most powerful stimulus to all to become deserving likewise ? Would not its tendency be to raise the tone of moral feeling amongst the slaves, and to animate them to that honest and persevering industry, by means of which they might look forward to the blessing of one day or other enjoying the sweets of hallowed liberty ? Surely it would. Nor will the objection urged, as to the tendency of compulsory manumission to promote dishonesty, stand for a single moment the test of inquiry. For who are they that will aspire to liberty ? Whose hearts are they that will burn within them, animated by the laudable desire of becoming freemen ? Certainly not the already vile or worthless ; nor that too numerous class of unhappy Africans, who are so sunk in ignorance and in superstition as hardly to be able to discern between their right hand and their left : but it will be those whom Christian instruction hath raised above the level of their fellows, and to whom religion and civilization have given a foretaste of the sweets of

liberty, and taught them how to use it. These would be the men, foremost to labour, heart and hand, for the enjoyment of this privilege, and in whom the British islands would hereafter recognise the securest pledge for their safeguard and protection.

PUNISHMENTS.

Of all the abuses which have ever existed in any country, and particularly in the management of slaves, there never has been one calling more loudly for redress than this of punishment. It has been attempted to palliate or to defend the prevalence of this practice, by the existence of corporal punishment in the British army; and arguments have been adduced in support of the continuance of such a system by the analogy subsisting between them. But the cases of the soldier and of the slave are widely different. The one voluntarily enters the service of his country, and receives a supposed equivalent as the condition upon which he sacrifices his liberty to the will of others. The other is torn from his home, compelled to labour against his will without hire, and to submit to laws to which he is bound by the heaviest penalties to give an unconditional assent. There is also this difference to be observed in the circumstances of the parties:—what-

ever be the punishment of the soldier, that punishment cannot be inflicted upon him at the arbitrary dictum of an individual ; he is fairly and impartially tried, and that by men without passion or prejudice, and whose honour as soldiers, and whose humanity as men, are both concerned in their verdict. But not so the slave. The law gives his master—or any man, however base, to whom his master may delegate that power—an authority the most arbitrary, and almost absolute, over him. He may, as often as his anger, or caprice, or revenge dictates, and without any previous trial, or even (if such a man could be found) without assigning any reason, inflict upon his person, with a common cart-whip, thirty-nine lashes—not unfrequently to be “brushed out with ebonies,” or, in other words, to be lacerated by thorns whilst his wounds, yet bleeding from the infliction of the former punishment, are open to receive them. It is no libel upon the planters to state these facts ; for, however humane and merciful as individuals they may be, here is a power which no man living should possess over his fellow-creature, but which at this very hour is entrusted to the West India planter. And especially when it is considered that both the quantum and the mode of punishment devolves upon overseers, a class of men possessing no interest in the slaves, beyond a mere stipendiary allowance, receivable at the caprice of his employer.

In the heat of passion, or on the impulse of the moment, he may, without taking time to weigh the circumstances or the merits of the case, command the slave to be laid down with his face to the earth, and in the most summary and cruel manner flog him, as he would not do, though restive, his own pampered steed. Surely it cannot be reconcileable with the due administration of justice; surely it cannot tend to maintain the peace or the stability of the colonies; neither can it operate as a moral stimulus to the slave to demean himself submissively in his present condition, that such monstrous power should be confided to men who, if they abuse it not, yet have, unquestionably, many strong temptations to do so. Let the negro be taught to respect the laws; let him, whilst slavery has a being, and even when it shall have ceased to exist, be made amenable to what is right and proper; but, having taught him first what his rights are, then secure to him, against violence and against outrage, the full and the impartial enjoyment of those rights, and thus raise him above the level of the brute, which by British enactment is secured by laws and penalties from the wanton barbarity of its oppressors. How paradoxical, that, in one happy portion of the King of England's dominions, a man may not cruelly abuse his ass, and yet in another portion of the very same possession, (oh, lamentable fact!) man may,

with impunity, and as spleen or passion governs him, so despotically lord it over his fellow-man, that his life has not unfrequently been the sacrifice to this demon of vengeance. Justice, reason, and humanity, all cry aloud for the redress of this abuse. * * * * *

It has been said, and, I believe, justly too, that few soldiers, after the disgrace of once receiving corporal punishment, have ever after been able to hold up their heads amongst their companions in arms; that they have, after such an exposure, become either heart-broken, or indifferent to their future condition. And so it is with the slave. Punishment brutalizes, and sinks the already barbarous still lower in the scale of wretchedness. It fails to operate as an incentive to industry, and consequently it fails in producing the effects which are expected from it. Should it, however, prove a means of doing so, the effects are transient, and leading more frequently to the repetition of the same system of punishment than to any happier result. It hardens the heart—deadens all the finer feelings of the creature—and, if it excite not the slave to any acts of open or secret revenge, its natural tendency is such as to extinguish that confidence, and kindly intercourse and feeling, which under other circumstances will be found to exist, and to promote in the negro's breast a hatred of his oppressor, and a watchfulness that he may in every

pursuit gain the advantage over him. Hence it happens that amongst the more refractory negroes punishment from the lash is ever preferred to solitary confinement, for, having no character to lose, they prefer that species of punishment the endurance of which is soonest at an end.

But if these observations should have any weight, when the subject of punishment is treated of in a general way, how much more loudly will it not be found to demand the interference of the legislators, when the case of females is particularly adverted to. It were sad enough to think that such a system of punishment could be tolerated in the case of men, but doubly so when it is considered that women likewise are subject to it, under circumstances of the most shameful indecency. The young and the aged, mothers of families, and even those whose hoary locks proclaim length of years, are openly, and in the presence of the other sex, doomed to the endurance of this disgraceful abuse. Yes; were it not that I had rather see the evil corrected by the strong hand of power, on the ground of its barbarous and unchristian tendency, than from the exposure of some of its many enormities, I could point out some of the most astounding facts bearing upon this point, and that would harrow up the soul of any individual not yet past feeling. But I shall be con-

tent at present, without entering into a minute detail, with merely hinting at the fact, that the unhappy female, even at that season when nature puts in her claim to more than common sympathy, is often doomed to suffer from the unrelenting lash; and, in some cases, with an aggravation of wrong, such as, were I to repeat, no reader of these letters would credit. But it remains to raise the poor sable slave from the depth of her degradation; for I am persuaded you will allow that every stroke inflicted upon her sinks her lower in the scale of being. She may be a mother! and what will her children say, as she returns to them bleeding in sorrow? And her husband, too!—if the black man have a heart—oh! how will it beat, and rise, and swell with indignation, against the cowardly dishonour done to the partner of his bed! The wonder is, that nature's feelings can be bound and enslaved as the body is, when every spring in man's affections is impelled to burst the barrier and to avenge the wrong. What a conflict must there be between revenge and fear, as the husband, in silent sorrow (for he dare not give utterance to what is passing within), contemplates the scene;* and what a lesson do the children learn, but to desecrate the wretch that made

* See Ashten's Narrative, page 45.

a mother weep. I know not a more bitter drop in the whole cup of slavery than this.

But it is vauntingly said by some, that when they punish the female slave the whip is not used, and that rods only, or ebones, are substituted for it. And what of this? Is there not the same scandalous exposure of the person of the female?—and is there not only this difference between them, that if the wounds are not so deep, they are yet more abundant? But it is not the fact, that even rods are generally adopted in the punishment of females. There may be, and there are a few isolated cases, where some persons, from humanity, but many more from a view to their own interests, and that they may be thought humane, have adopted this plan. But in general the female slave knows no difference from the opposite sex, either as to the manner or the quantum of punishment they receive. I have heard of some, however, who, by way of encouraging marriages amongst their slaves, have added this privilege, amongst others, to such persons, that a female, when once married, should afterwards be exempt from punishment. On one estate, where the practice is said to prevail, the following illustration of the pertinacity with which the right was defended took place:—“A married woman, a slave, having been remiss in some department of her labour, the driver, also a negro, was proceeding as usual to

administer summary correction, when the female resisted. The driver called others to his assistance, no doubt intending to give her a double portion, when the woman, boiling with anger, could do little more than point to one of her fingers. There was her marriage-ring; and, resting her finger upon it, she dared the driver to proceed. ‘Hei! me da married woman—first take off dis, and dem from me.’ The driver was compelled to abandon his whip, and seek for some other mode of redress.”

Little has been said in this letter as to the quantum of punishment, as that subject has been so often dwelt upon. It is enough for my present purpose briefly to direct attention to the number of stripes—to the person inflicting them—and to the instrument by which they are inflicted. The law prescribes thirty-nine stripes as the maximum of punishment. This, when contrasted with military usage, will by some be considered not excessive: but mark the instrument—a whip, the lash of which is from nine to twelve feet in length, wielded by a powerful arm, well skilled in the management of it; so much so, that by the sound of the whip the negro is commonly roused to pursue his daily toil, the woods resounding with the echo. This instrument, also, is not unfrequently in the hand of a person in whose breast revenge or jealousy may exist, which serve to nerve the arm that holds it. It

has been attempted to be shown by some, that the drivers are, in general, men who are advanced in years—rather to be distinguished by their venerable locks than by their austere countenances; but this is not the fact. The driver is commonly an able-bodied negro; and, from his office and habits, too frequently possessing less of the milk of human kindness than other men: dressed in a little brief authority, he feels the full weight of an office which enjoins upon him the execution of all his master's commands, whether those commands may be agreeable to his own natural feelings or not. The orders which he receives are conclusive and peremptory: whatever stands in the way of their accomplishment, it is for him to remove by the strong arm of power, or be himself removed from his office, followed by disgrace and punishment. There will be cases, no doubt, where the character of the driver will be otherwise than is here represented. Instances have been known of their expressing an abhorrence of punishment, and anxiously inquiring how they could, with a sense of duty to their masters, be spared the painful predicament of enforcing it: but such, it is presumed, are of rare occurrence; and it commonly happens, but especially amongst those whose minds have not yet been civilized by the peaceful effects of Christianity, that the driver will be found ready for all work, and more readily con-

verting his office into an engine for the exercise of the most arbitrary power, and using it for the purpose of gratifying the worst passions of his nature, rather than that he may administer in the smallest degree towards befriending his brother in adversity: he lords it over his fellow-men, and rules with a rod of iron the weak and the helpless, whose wretchedness of body and of estate can furnish no pander to the gratification of his appetites. But slavery were a lot hard enough to bear, without super-adding to its misery the absolute rule of so many masters.

MARRIAGE.

Twenty years ago there was hardly an instance on record of a marriage having been celebrated between a solitary couple of negro slaves in the island of Jamaica. A most lamentable indifference as to their state and character as rational and immortal beings existed in the minds of their superiors; nor had the wretched creatures themselves the advantage of being instructed as to the unlawfulness of that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, which then prevailed almost universally, and even now, to a very considerable degree, still prevails. It was reserved for the missionaries to inculcate upon their dark understandings a more salutary

lesson. These men, who had gone out with their lives in their hands, simple-minded and faithful, were the foremost in this good work. The state of the church of England was, at that time, in our 'colonial possessions at a very low ebb. The most heartless apathy prevailed amongst her clergy; and it seemed as if the negro race were to be altogether excommunicated from the privileges of their public as well as of their private ministrations. The white man's monopoly extended not only to a monopoly of all that could gratify the senses—revelling, as he then did, in the enjoyment of the most unbounded luxury; but it was alleged, that to him likewise pertained the exclusive privilege of divine worship, since there was not actually, at the period in question, a single spot in the parish churches allotted to the accommodation of the slave. If he came there (as few of them ever did), it was either that he might stand or lie down in the aisle unheeded, to return to his home filled with as much superstition as when he entered it. Catechetical instruction was wholly unknown (for the negro by many was looked upon as an animal inferior to man, and hardly possessed of an immortal soul); nor did the clergy in any way direct their discourse to them, nor recognise this portion of their fellow-creatures as members of their congregations. It is not to be wondered at, if, under such circumstances, immorality should have prevailed

to a fearful extent—that polygamy, with every other impure rite, borrowed from their forefathers, and introduced from Africa, should have been almost universally practised amongst them. The negroes were, in fact, left to themselves as it concerned their religious instruction. The planter got his sugar and his rum, and took no farther thought concerning them, provided they were strong and healthy, and equal to their daily toil. So that what from the natural bias of their own corrupt minds, and the frightful example of immorality exhibited in the lives of planters, the slave remained, from the conquest of the island by the British, in the year one thousand six hundred and fifty-five, till within about twenty years ago, or for a period of about one hundred and fifty years, unheeded, as to whether he was a worshipper of the moon, a disciple of the false prophet, or whether, like the Ephesians of old, he bowed down in the temple of the great goddess Diana. But things are no longer so. The successful labours of the missionaries soon roused the slumbering energies of the established church to what she should have been foremost in attempting; and to them, in a very considerable degree at least, is to be attributed, under the blessing of God, that moral change which has taken place in the negro character from what it once was. And this was the principle with which the missionaries set out, of excluding from

church membership every individual whose manner of life was not strictly conformable to the Christian rule. The negro must have dissolved every illegitimate connection, as an evidence of the sincerity with which he embraced the Christian faith, before the missionary would openly acknowledge and receive him into full communion ; and such was the effect produced by this wholesome discipline, that in a very little time the tone of morality was so raised among the slave population that no one ever thought of claiming the privileges of discipleship until all these, and other pre-requisites of the Christian life, were faithfully adhered to. Hence, marriage, from having been altogether or almost entirely unknown, or confined to particular districts, soon spread amongst the negroes : so that within twenty years, in districts where it had been entirely unknown, several thousand couple were married according to the prescribed rite of the established church. What the missionaries so auspiciously began, the clergy of the church of England are now, with no less zeal in many cases, as efficiently carrying forward. Marriage is now becoming general amongst the slaves, and the greater respect in which the participants in this economy of domestic happiness are held by their fellow-servants over those who still continue in their heathenish state, is a most convincing proof how much marriage has contributed to promote

their moral well-being and happiness, and, in a considerable degree, the interests of the planters themselves.

Whilst these pleasing changes, however, are in process, there is yet wanting, in order to a full confirmation of the benefits which the slave derives from them, such legal enactments as may not only protect his connubial rights from violation, but prevent him from being separated from the partner of his affection. It is somewhat paradoxical to think, that after the slave, with the full concurrence of his master, has been joined in wedlock, and after it has been declared by a lawfully appointed minister, "those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," he may the very next hour be torn from his bride, sold to the highest and best bidder, and separated from her to the remotest corner of the land. Nor is there any law in existence at this moment to administer the slightest relief in a case of such an aggravated nature. Not that I believe separations often take place under such circumstances. Public opinion, in this matter at least, has done justice to the slave, and given it against the practice of separation. There are, however, instances in which they have happened; nor is there any other hindrance to a frequent repetition of the evil, than that, so precarious in its tenure, the breath of public opinion. At any time, if so disposed, the

proprietor may set up a family for sale "in lots to suit purchasers." The father may be torn from his child—the mother from her infant—the sister from the brother, and the brother from the sister's embrace—and the wife and the husband, though they may have been companions in suffering, and bearers of each other's misery for many years, and though they may have been settled with a numerous and a hopeful family, yet, by some untoward change in the circumstances of the estate, such as the death of a proprietor, or the embarrassment of his circumstances, or the passing of the estate into other hands, this once-united family may, without any previous warning or preparation for the approaching evil, be scattered to the four winds of heaven, to meet on this side the grave no more. Surely this is an evil requiring prompt and complete reform. But the proprietor, and even the manager, possesses a further power, needing reform also. He may not only separate the slaves after marriage, but he may withhold his sanction to their marriage, and, without assigning any reason, stand in the way of their individual affection. It has been asserted that this power is necessary to check the licentious disposition of the slave, and to the moral government of an estate, as the planter must be the best judge whether the parties desiring marriage are free from any previous contract, and that without some such restraint there might

be danger of introducing polygamy under the sanction of Christianity itself. But these restrictions are no less impolitic than inexpedient. Every obstacle that stands in the way of their marriage should be completely removed, nor should any objection offered by the planter operate against the slave; unless backed by the concurrent testimony of the magistrate. It is not impossible, as such cases have happened, that a *master* might, from the most unworthy motives, resist the marriage of his female slave, and it were a hard case, surely, that the natural affections of a creature, already bound down by such weighty obligations, should be farther reduced to so cruel a subjection in order to gratify *his* mere caprice.

The protection of the connubial rights of the slave forms another subject for legislation. These rights may be violated with impunity. Instances have occurred in which they have been violated. It is not presumed that such cases are either common or notorious. It is to be hoped they are of very rare occurrence. But the freeman may offer this highest insult to the slave; and if he be a master over him, he may, if necessary to the gratification of his sensual desires, imprison, punish, or otherwise oppress, in order to effect his purpose. It is high time, then, that a barrier should be raised against this system, and that a wall of defence should be planted around the connu-

bial rights of the slave, such as neither the most vicious nor the most arbitrary should be able to overthrow. Nor can there be a single argument of the smallest weight offered against the passing of such an act as would secure to the slave the fullest and the freest enjoyment of these privileges. It can in no way operate to the disadvantage of the planter. Far otherwise. It is a well-known fact, that on those estates where marriages have prevailed there has been a considerable increase in the population over that of former years, accompanied by a very marked improvement also in the manners and in the habits of the slave. These advantages unquestionably are on the side of the planter, as he will himself allow, although in making the concession it conveys indirectly the severest censure, that the first practical lessons of the advantages resulting from Christianity should be taught him by his own slaves.

PROTECTION OF THE SABBATH.

By the constitution of England the Sabbath is acknowledged as a day of rest, and the law has attached to the violation of it (however their exactions may have fallen into disuse), pains and penalties. It were monstrous indeed, if, in a nation professedly Christian,

the divine law, commanding the observance of the Sabbath as a holy day, should be set aside. It has, however, been recognised as a part of the law of the land, and all classes, from the lowest to the highest, participate in the advantages of it. As a day of rest from worldly toil and labour, it is peculiarly a blessing to the poor man, independently of those higher privileges which it confers upon him in common with others in the public ordinances of religion. But if the Sabbath prove thus a blessing to the poor cottager of Britain, how much more so must it not prove to the negro slave, who, worn out with six days' toil and care, in the unrequited service of another, tastes for a little season of the sweets and the privileges of freedom? But has the negro a Sabbath on which to rest? This is a question often asked, and much controverted. It shall be answered briefly:—The negro has *the semblance of a Sabbath*. By the Jamaica slave law, there are penalties attached to the working of sugar-mills on that day. The act specifies, “That during the crop, not only shall the slaves, as heretofore, be exempted from the labour of the estate or plantation on Sundays, but that no mills shall be put about or worked between the hours of seven o'clock on Saturday night, and five o'clock on Monday morning, under the penalty of twenty pounds, to be recovered against the overseer or other person having the charge of such place.”

Such is the law on the subject ; but what is the fact ? Every one knows that sugar-mills are worked on the Sunday, and commonly at an early hour of the evening ; that magistrates, as well as others, join in the violation of the law ; and cases have been known to exist, wherein the very slaves in hospital have been turned out on the evening of the Sabbath, to supply the place of the negroes absent at church, or at their grounds, and so worked until the others have returned to relieve them. Such is the negro Sabbath.

By another clause of the slave law, the slave is allowed one day in every fortnight to cultivate his provision grounds, exclusive of Sundays, *except during crop time*, which often lasts six months of the year, and when, of course, the grounds must be laboured on Sunday, or the slave perish for want of food. Such is the negro Sabbath.

Another clause tells us, " That no person whomsoever shall employ the slaves of others, for any reward or hire to be paid to them, *on Sunday, without the consent in writing of the overseer first obtained*, under a penalty of five pounds." Thus may the slave be hired by others on Sunday, provided his master consents. Such is the negro Sabbath.

By an estimate of the number of Sabbaths throughout the year on which the converted slaves are found to frequent public worship, and taken from the actual

observation of the missionaries, it appears that they cannot attend oftener than about once in three or four weeks, or about thirteen times every year—the other Sabbaths being spent in providing food for their families; not to mention their occasional fatigue from the spell of the preceding night disqualifying them from attending. Such is the negro Sabbath.

There are also a numerous class of persons, such as domestics, cattle-boys, shepherds, watchmen, &c., who seldom, and, in many cases, who never, have an opportunity of attending religious worship, nor religious instruction of any kind—not to particularise the numbers of slaves who, on sugar estates, are almost invariably employed to a late hour on the Sabbath mornings in “potting sugar,” and, consequently, debarred from the public exercises of religion. Such is the negro Sabbath.

Following in the train of these evils, next comes the Sunday market, to which the young and the old, for miles around, resort, to buy, and sell, and barter their several commodities, consuming the entire day in going to and in returning from market, that they may dispose of their surplus provisions. Such is the negro Sabbath.

The law requiring the master to allow his slave at least twenty-six days in the year, for the cultivation of his grounds, exclusive of the Sabbath—often, to suit

his own purposes, the master takes that Sabbath from him, on which alone he could have had the opportunity of receiving *religious instruction*, repaying him with a week-day, without any such *privilege*. Such also is the negro's Sabbath.

Thus the negro has the semblance of a Sabbath; but it is such a Sabbath as leaves him no other alternative but either to labour his grounds on that day, or starve; such a Sabbath as his master may deprive him of, under the pretext of repaying him with another day, (which it is believed he commonly does pay him)—such a Sabbath, as, even when spent to the best advantage, leaves him but a partial share of the blessings which it was designed to convey, and without any remedy whereby to secure to himself and to his family its fullest enjoyment.

Now the Slave Code of Jamaica professedly designs to give the negro a Sabbath—a full, complete, and an entire Sabbath, for rest, and for religious instruction. The preamble in the seventh clause of that Act runs thus:—"Whereas it is expedient *to render the Sabbath as much as possible a day of rest, and for religious worship.*" The Jamaica legislature have expressed in these words all that is required—that the Sabbath should, *as much as possible*, be made a day of rest, and for religious instruction. But how, under such circumstances, does the possibility exist, whilst

Sunday-marketing, Sunday-labouring, and the toil incident to their being often overworked, precludes the slaves from attending public worship? In order to make the Sabbath what it should be, three important changes are necessary to be effected:—The negro to be allowed every Saturday throughout the year for the cultivation of his grounds—Sunday markets to be entirely abolished—and night-work on sugar-estates, that most deadly evil, to be altogether prohibited. A few individuals, more benevolent than others, have already effected the latter change, and found no reason to repent their having done so. Of all the evils to which the negro is liable, throughout the whole system of slavery, there is not a greater than this—night-work on sugar estates. In proof of this let the reader only look at the facts to be found in a late return to Parliament, of the average increase and decrease of slaves for the five preceding years to 1828, on the principal properties in Jamaica, distinguishing coffee and other plantations from the sugar estates. We find, from these returns, one sugar estate with 663 slaves, on which there has been an average annual decrease of *ten*. On another, with 242 slaves, a decrease of *fifteen*; and on a third, called Blue Mountain, the still more fearful waste of human life discovered, in an *average decrease of seventeen negroes annually out of 314*;—or *eighty-five slaves, being equal to one-*

fifth of the whole population, cut off in the space of five years! The estates of the heirs of John Thorp, situated in the parish of Trelawney, shew a diminution of numbers, within the same period, amounting to two hundred, out of a population of 2809. But on the coffee plantations, where night-work is unknown, mark the contrast: on a plantation having 214 slaves, *the average increase* for five years is three per cent. per annum; and, taking an extensive parish, the staple commodity of which is coffee, the average increase throughout is not less than three per cent. per annum. Can there be a more convincing proof of the shocking waste to which human life is subject on sugar estates, (and owing mainly to the system of night-work,) than this? And yet to such a system must the man of grey hairs, or the mother of a numerous offspring, after toiling throughout the day under the scorching beams of a tropical sun, submit; and again be exposed to the bleak north wind, to the chilling mists of heaven, or to the pelting rain; and, when overtaken with sleep, to lie down faint and weary, and at the risk of a heavy punishment, under the great canopy of heaven, without another comforter, save Him who pities the oppressed. This evil, in common with Sunday-marketing, must be annihilated before the negro can know the full privilege of a Christian Sabbath. The law must stipulate, fully and clearly, the

duration of negro labour—unless, indeed, we would perpetuate a system of national suicide, and tolerate the further continuance of an evil, which is annually sweeping into the eternal world so many hundred souls.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

The appointment of bishops to control and superintend the affairs of the West Indian church, proves the anxiety of the British government that the slaves should have the freest access to the means devised for their religious instruction. This measure, so truly desirable and important, was adopted with the free concurrence of all parties. The bishops, on landing in the islands, were received with every demonstration of respect; and wherever they went, in the discharge of their official duties, the same degree of deference every where awaited them. In order to the exercise of their ecclesiastical functions, it was necessary that many of the existing laws relating to the government of the clergy should be repealed, a measure which was readily adopted by the local legislators with the least possible delay, and every obstacle that stood in the way of their having the fullest and the most commanding influence over the clergy was

removed. Thus far it would seem as if the West India church was prepared for the performance of a great work, since it possessed all the machinery that was necessary for carrying into effect the benevolent designs of the British government. But mark the mistake. Not a single obstacle that stood in the way of the religious instruction of the slave was set aside. The master continued to maintain an authority as absolute over the soul as over the body of the slave. He continued to possess the power of repelling all religious teachers from his estate, no one daring, without his authority, not the mitre excepted, to set foot upon it, even on Sundays or Negro-days, to preach, or teach, or otherwise to infringe upon his prerogative. And in this state things remain in Jamaica at this very hour. The consequence is that few masters will consent to have their slaves instructed at all ; and that the instruction given, in ninety-nine out of one hundred cases, is merely *oral* ; and that the simple boon of permitting them to learn to read is withheld by their superiors. And why withheld ? The man who would perpetuate the evils of slavery, and farther entail them upon unborn generations, is perfectly consistent in such opposition. Knowledge is power : and could the slaves be held in their original blindness, there would be nothing to hinder the master, whilst such ignorance prevailed, from maintaining the

same sovereign and undisturbed authority which he has been wont to do. But, in these days of light, it were impossible to preclude it from breaking in here and there upon the negro's mind, although the utmost precautions were adopted for keeping it from him. Knowledge the slave will have, whether his master will or not; and hence it more deeply concerns the planter to see that he is instructed in right principles. There is a powerful evidence that may be adduced in order to prove the superiority of knowledge (when tempered by religious instruction) in preserving the peace and the security of the colonies. It is a fact which cannot be disputed, and that may be proved to the satisfaction of government, that *in no single instance, in the Island of Jamaica, has a solitary case been known of treason or rebellion being charged against any of the negro slaves who have been in church communion with the ministers of the Establishment, of the Moravian, of the Wesleyan, nor, as far as can be ascertained, of the Baptist persuasions.* Whilst it is notorious that, in those districts where rebellion has raised its antichristian arm, there has been either a want of fidelity on the part of the resident clergy, or the unhappy slaves who have been deluded into conspiracies have been cut off from the means of religious instruction, as well as from a participation in those Christian privileges placed within reach of

their more fortunate brethren. This assertion is not made unadvisedly; and the fact is put forth as a powerful argument why—on the grounds both of political expediency, and of the personal well-being and security of the whole population of the West India Islands—the negro should have the most uncontrolled access to every authorised religious teacher.

In the Island of Antigua, the negroes have for a long time enjoyed, in a considerable degree, these advantages. The missionaries have had access to the slaves at their own houses, and under the sanction of their masters: chapels of the rudest construction, which, in the simple language of the people have been termed “praise-houses,” have been erected by the slaves themselves, where the missionaries have been permitted to attend their followers, at whatever season may suit the convenience of all parties. And what has been the result? Have either discord, or insubordination, or rebellion, ensued? Certainly not. That island presents to the world, at this very moment, a pattern of what real religion can effect upon the mind of man under ever possible circumstance of his being. But, in Jamaica, things are far otherwise. There, the representatives of comparatively very few estates, tolerate the labours of the Christian teacher, and still fewer would admit him to that confidential intercourse with the slave in his own dwelling which

has been already noticed. Nay more, it has sometimes happened that proprietors,—and *they females too*,—less humane than their own resident agents, have expelled the minister without assigning any cause; thus preventing him from pursuing his Christian labours on the estate, although the instruction so imparted was without cost, given by a minister of the Establishment, merely oral, and usually during the hours of recreation allotted to the slave. Can it be wondered at, then, that any general attempt to teach the slave to read should be construed into an act little short of treason? That, by many of the planters, the sight of a book in a negro's hand should be viewed with much the same feelings of indignant suspicion, as the Roman Catholic priest would eye the possession of a Bible by an Irish peasant?

Let these obstacles, then, to the religious instruction of the slave, be done away for ever. Concede, to every minister of the Establishment, the freest access, at all times, to the slaves on their own plantations. And to every Missionary, and to every school-master and mistress, producing satisfactory testimonials, to the lawfully-constituted authorities, let the same freedom of admission be also extended. Should a presumption at any time arise, against any of these individuals, of their having exceeded the limits prescribed by their office, by inculcating in the minds of the slaves, principles or precepts at variance with the

peace of society, then let them be made amenable to justice, and let that justice be armed with a tenfold penalty against them. Nor let it be forgotten, that if such were the design of the missionaries, to unsettle the negro mind, and to rouse him to revenge his wrongs, the die would long ere this have been cast with the British colonies, and a flame would have been kindled, which not all the artifice of man could have extinguished; and the chain that binds the slave would have fallen off for ever. But, maligned as the missionaries have been, and misinterpreted as their proceedings are, such is not their office—as the peaceful, and civilizing, and practical effects already produced through their instrumentality on the lives of so many thousands, abundantly testify. Yes, if there were not a British bayonet within the whole confines of slavery, strange as the assertion may seem to be, the Christian missionaries alone, with free access to the objects of their benevolence, would stem the torrent of discord at the fountain, and prove to their country a protection against every internal commotion.

Remove, then, the various impediments to the instruction of the slave at present existing, and Britain shall yet rejoice in the prosperity of her colonies. Leave them as they now are, and I will venture to predict that twenty years shall not have expired till they shall be lost to her for ever.

TESTIMONY OF THE REV. W. WRIGHT ON COLONIAL SLAVERY.

IN the last place, I have the satisfaction of adding the testimony, upon Colonial Slavery, of the Rev. William Wright, another able and intelligent clergyman of the English church. Mr. Wright returned about two months ago from the Cape of Good Hope, where, for ten years, he has been employed as a missionary of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts." In the prosecution of his sacred duties in that colony he possessed peculiar opportunities of accurately observing the actual condition of the slaves, and the operation of the slave-system, as it affects the character and the welfare both of the master and the bondman; and of those opportunities he has not failed diligently to avail himself: The results of his observations on this subject are now in the press, and will very shortly be given to the public in a separate shape. Judging from what I have had the pleasure of perusing of his work in MS. (for personal acquaintance with the author has, in this case, admitted me to that special privilege), I have no doubt that it will form a very valuable addition to the voluntary testimonies against this iniquitous system that have recently and unexpectedly come forth, in aid of the good and noble cause of negro emancipation, and to strengthen the hands of its Christian advocates. Referring my readers earnestly to the forthcoming pamphlet itself, and especially such as are anxious to examine well-authenticated illustrations of the *cruelties and oppressions* which are the unfailing progeny of this prolific nurse of wretchedness and crime, I avail myself in the meanwhile of the author's kind permission to extract the following brief passage from his general remarks.*

Ed.

* With the character and condition also of the free coloured population of the Cape colony, especially the Hottentots, and of

“The degrees of comfort enjoyed by the slave, according as the circumstances of his animal condition were more or less favourable, have weighed but little in my mind, comparatively with the melancholy fact, that he was still in hopeless bondage—deprived of

the free native tribes residing near its frontiers, especially the Caffers, Mr. Wright has made himself intimately acquainted. In the conscientious prosecution of the Christian objects for which he was sent out by his society to that remote region, he has taken much pains to acquire the languages and to gain the confidence of those long-oppressed and calumniated races of men, by frequent and familiar intercourse, and by occasional residence even among the uncivilized tribes, who are represented in Europe as untameable and bloodthirsty savages. The valuable and accurate information thus acquired will not, I trust, be withheld from the public by this benevolent clergyman, but be speedily brought forward in aid of the great cause of Christian philanthropy in South Africa, in which he feels so deep an interest, and for which he has suffered, and is still suffering (from quarters, too, that ought most warmly to support his views and estimate his services), unworthy persecution. On the subject now adverted to (the treatment of the natives) two valuable works have recently appeared, viz., “*Researches in South Africa*,” by the Rev. Dr. Philip, published in 1828, and “*Humane Policy towards the Aborigines of New Settlements*,” by S. Bannister, Esq., late Attorney General of New South Wales, published in 1830. The former work is well known, and justly appreciated by the public. The latter, I fear, is as yet scarcely known at all, though it well deserves to be perused by every friend of Africa and of humanity, being full of interesting information and valuable suggestions respecting the treatment of the uncivilized races of men, with whom, in the prosecution of our schemes of colonization, we are constantly brought into collision, and who have hitherto, to our national disgrace, been uniformly dealt with in a mode alike inhuman, unchristian, and impolitic.—ED.

the natural rights which he had derived from our common parent ; transmitting the same degrading inheritance to his children and his children's children ;—a chattel—a thing liable to be bought and sold ; without civil existence (as he legally was at the Cape), consequently without the right, or even the permission, to form a valid marriage-contract, as he was until a very late period ; and liable, as he still is, and ever must be, to be torn from his wife, and children, and relatives, and friends, and connections, at the discretion of his master, or by the arm of the law. Add to this the tremendous power of the lash intrusted to his owner, which may be arbitrarily exercised upon his degraded body for the most trifling offence ; together with the perpetual infliction of the most galling and irritating reproaches—an infliction from which, however intolerable, he cannot escape, and for which, however cruel, he has no redress—as it is a principle of the colonial law, *that a slave cannot be offended by words*. And yet, after this grievous list of debasements and disabilities, you have only before you a small portion of what slavery is in its avowedly *mildest form*. If the usual assertion of the proprietors be correct, that a slave has little or no feeling on such subjects, what a picture of degraded man does this present ! But to this proposition I cannot assent. It is scarcely compatible with what yet remains of his native dignity, though body and mind, and all the

intellectual faculties, are enchained by his fellow-mortal and fellow-sinner.

“ I am now talking of slavery in its best and most inviting aspect. I am not shading the picture with a description of the hidden mysteries of slavery, nor strengthening my argument by entering into its recesses, and dragging to public view the bleeding victim of long-cherished revenge, or exposing the fatal effects of infuriated passion. Cases of this kind no doubt will be found under another head; and, wherever such illustrations present themselves, it will be perceived that they have not been officiously sought out or selected, but that they are cases which have forced themselves upon public notice; and that they are not brought forward here for the purpose of raising a charge of peculiar inhumanity against any body of men, but to demonstrate the *evil principle* of slavery itself; to exhibit its utter incompatibility with the purest, the best, and most perfect of institutions; to shew that all amelioration and mitigation are hopeless, while the axe is not laid to the root of the tree; and to furnish one proof more, if such were necessary, that slavery not only debases and degrades its victim, but has a reciprocal tendency to destroy the moral feeling of the master, and that it carries cruelty, and perjury, and almost every other vice, in its train.”